

Stories of the

Warmth of Patients' & Physicians' Feelings



I read a book last year by Dr. Thomas Stern, the role model and technical advisor for the 1970s hit television series *Marcus Welby, M.D.* Dr. Stern shared stories from his 22 years as a general practitioner with the writers and they used those stories to shape Marcus Welby into the family doctor that most people wished they could find.

Dr. Stern's book is filled with colorful anecdotes of illness, healing and relationships between a patient and doctor. He writes, "I'll tell you stories of the warmth of patients' feelings toward me as their doctor, but, especially, I'll tell you about how I loved each of them, the people who trusted me enough to refer to me as 'my doctor.'" This book helped me solidify my decision to create a new practice for my patients and myself.



Laura Beaty MD

Dr. Laura Beaty is the weekly on-air host for Radio Sandy Springs' Health Hour Wednesdays at 9 a.m. on AM 1620 or www.radiosandysprings.com.

Unfortunately, expectations of long and nurturing patient-physician relationships have been lost. There are many barriers that exist to having this type of relationship. Most physicians care for between 4,000-7,000 patients within their practices. Appointments are scheduled for 15 minute intervals. The latest studies reveal that physicians spend fewer than *nine minutes* in direct contact with their patients at each appointment.

Battling with insurance companies for necessary medical tests and medications as well as for reasonable compensation is ongoing. Malpractice costs and liability concerns are climbing. Automated phone systems limit access and de-

crease person-to-person contact. Today's medical climate is challenging in many respects for both patient and physician.

After considerable reflection, I chose to create a medical practice that returns to the ideals of *Marcus Welby, M.D.* The concept is simple. Take better care of patients by spending more time and creating true relationships. This can occur when you care for a limited number of patients. I must admit that I barely remember the series *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, but I do remember the white-haired general practitioner that took care of my entire family and continued to make house calls until he retired at the age of 86. These are the values that inspired me to go to medical school and into the practice of family medicine. These are the ideals that pushed me to find a better system of caring for my patients—to be a family physician who is there to help navigate and understand one's health throughout life's changes. I am discovering the art and warmth of practicing medicine.

I am now approaching the one-year anniversary of my new medical practice. I am starting to understand what Dr. Stern meant about being referred to as "my doctor." I am developing deep bonds with and enjoy earning the trust of my new patients. It is very rewarding to have a patient proudly introduce me by saying, "This is my doctor." It almost rivals the sensation of when my 3-year-old grabs my knees and proudly proclaims, "This is my mommy."

Dr. Laura Beaty is a board-certified family medicine physician who treats each of her patients individually, guaranteeing unparalleled access and availability. Her new concierge medical practice is located at 755 Mt. Vernon Road, Suite 120, Sandy Springs. To learn more about becoming one of Dr. Beaty's limited number of patients, call 404-851-0029 or visit www.laurabeatymd.com.