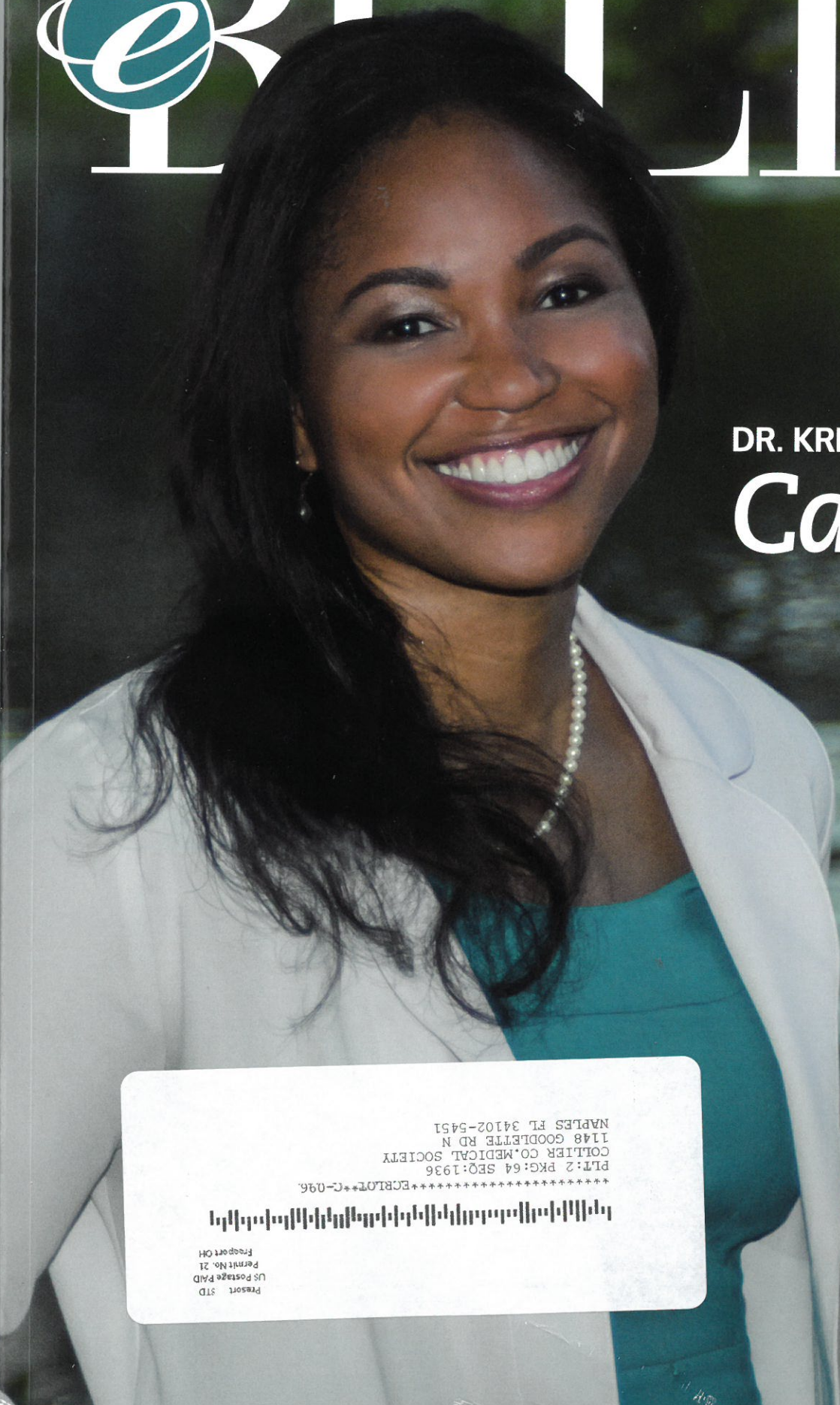


INSPIRING. EMPOWERING. WOMEN.

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DR. KRISTINA MIRABEAU-BEAL

Caring for Life

MIND HEALTH & ALZHEIMER'S PREVENTION

5 TIPS TO SERVING ON THE RIGHT BOARD

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WHAT WORKING WOMEN WANT

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True BEAM



Yes, She Can

LOCAL DOCTOR'S FAMILY INSPIRES A CLAIM FOR LIFELONG SUCCESS

When Dr. Kristina Mirabeau-Beale, a radiation oncologist with 21st Century Oncology, was in middle school she asked her parents, what is the best school in the country?

They said it was Harvard. *US News & World Report* also ranked Harvard University at the top.

"It's Harvard? Then that is where I am going!" she stated, claiming her spot.

Several years later, she was in Harvard's class of 2006, initially to study anthropology, and then obtaining her doctor of medicine and a master's degree in public health.

As the only full-time female radiation oncologist in Southwest Florida, Mirabeau-Beale has seen tremendous advancements in cancer treatment, especially in women's cancers and targeted therapies. With early screening, doctors can offer curative treatments more often.

It is all about early detection and intervention, she says, and often her focus is on managing her patients' quality of life.

"I want to make sure that I am not just saving you so that you can come to appointments and be miserable. I want to return you to the things that you enjoy in your life," says Mirabeau-Beale.

To fully understand Mirabeau-Beale's calling is to travel back in time to 1930's Jamaica where a little girl of Chinese ethnicity was growing up. When the girl was only 8 years old, her mother was murdered. From that moment on, she never attended school again. Instead, she was shuffled between family members, often facing abuse. The little girl was Mirabeau-Beale's maternal grandmother, a lady the family nicknamed "Bam" (rhymes with "mom").

With a fourth-grade education, Bam worked several jobs to eventually obtain a visa to come to the United States to clean houses

until she saved enough money to sponsor her husband and children.

"I have to think, when things are stressful or hard, that my grandmother was working eight times harder with a lot less gain. So, I really can't complain. I owe it to her because she is the one who got us here," says Mirabeau-Beale, noting that all of her cousins earned college educations.

Mirabeau-Beale grew up in Miami, an only child to older parents. Her father was a retired professor at Miami-Dade College, Haitian and an art collector who spoke seven languages. Mirabeau-Beale's mother worked as a secretary.

Woven into the fabric of Mirabeau-Beale's childhood was the understanding that her opportunities were the result of others' hard work, and those threads of gratefulness permeated her decisions and choices.

Between Mirabeau-Beale's junior and senior years of high school, she applied for a

DR. KRISTINA MIRABEAU-BEALE OF 21ST CENTURY ONCOLOGY OFFERS PRECISE CANCER TREATMENT THERAPY USING VARIAN TRUEBEAM, STATE OF THE ART RADIATION EQUIPMENT.



STORY BY KAREN HANLON :: MAKEUP BY SUSANA RUBIO, RUBIO ARTISTRY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHARLIE MCDONALD :: CHARLIEMCDONALDPHOTOGRAPHY.COM



six-week summer program at Massachusetts Institute of Technology that targeted underrepresented minorities in science.

Looking around the room at her MIT classmates, Mirabeau-Beale felt at home.

“For once I wasn’t the only black person in the class, and everyone loved multivariable calculus!” says Mirabeau-Beale with a laugh. “This is awesome. There are other people like me!”

The MIT experience was life-changing. While there, a couple of the students took a field trip to Harvard.

“This is a blessed place on earth,” Mirabeau-Beale recalls thinking. Surrounded by musicians and street performers, students playing chess and reading in the yard, Mirabeau-Beale describes the campus as a fantasyland.

A National Merit Scholar with perfect advanced placement test scores, Mirabeau-Beale earned acceptance into her dream school the following year.

‘I WON’T BE INTIMIDATED’

During the exciting week that the medical students donned their white coats, a Harvard orientation advisor cautioned Mirabeau-Beale to “wear her raincoat” when going into the hospitals for clinical training—and not just because of the Boston weather.

The advice proved valuable many times over: When a racist patient, wanting her excluded from his medical exam, demanded that she leave the room. And when she received an almost failing grade instead of high honors because she was mistaken for the only other black student. And when a mentor publicly implied that, despite her credentials and academic pedigree, her achievements were due to affirmative action and quotas, not merit.

At several junctures in her young life, Mirabeau-Beale had been told that someone who looked like her should not be trying to do the things she was doing. Teachers discouraged advanced classes, stating they were for gifted children only, or they questioned whether she could handle the work.

“It stings. It makes you want to curl up in a ball. You’ve just got to dust off that raincoat and not let it affect your self-worth or intimidate you,” she says.

In many ways, her parents had already wrapped her in a raincoat of their own, providing a base that helped her deflect comments from the petty to the more egregious.

“My parents were dedicated to my upbringing. They were the two chaperones on every field trip. We had dinner together every night and



I felt very supported with unconditional love,” she says. They taught her always to rise to their expectations rather than settle for other people’s suppositions.

Mirabeau-Beale still talks to her parents every day. “I called my mom this morning for a recipe for lentil soup.”

She tries to bring her family’s experiences into her patient care.

“People come from different backgrounds and levels of formal

UPPER LEFT: DR. KRISTINA MIRABEAU-BEALE SPENDS TIME WITH HER MOTHER, LJUNIOR BEALE MIRABEAU, AND GRANDMOTHER, ESMIE “BAM” BEALE.

UPPER RIGHT: HUSBAND, DR. SCOTT A. THOMPSON WITH ALEXANDER LEE, “ALEX;” DR. KRISTINA MIRABEAU-BEALE AND ANDREW ROCK, “DREW”

Setting 2018 Goals

“Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”

The last lines from the poem “The Summer Day,” by Mary Oliver, have always resonated with Dr. Kristina Mirabeau-Beale. The words remind her to be true to her most authentic self and make certain that she is using her talents in the ways that she should.

“My mom likes to say that we all have a blueprint in life,” says Mirabeau-Beale. “I do believe there is a path for each of us, and I want to make sure that I am on the right one.”

For her, that means setting goals in three categories:
 :: Personal :: Professional :: Family

Reevaluation is essential to the process. Ask:
 :: For what am I thankful?
 :: What am I looking forward to?
 :: What do I want to change?

January is the ideal month for making resolutions to achieve a higher calling.



DR. KRISTINA MIRABEAU-BEALE, SECOND FROM LEFT, KNEW SHE WAS HARVARD BOUND AT AN EARLY AGE. SHE GRADUATED FROM HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL IN 2010, THE DAY AFTER HUSBAND, DR. SCOTT A. THOMPSON, PROPOSED. THEY CELEBRATED WITH HER PARENTS, THE LATE ROCH L. MIRABEAU, FATHER, AND MOTHER, LUNIOR BEALE MIRABEAU.

education, but it does not necessarily indicate their aptitude. My grandmother has limited literacy. When I am explaining things to her to make sure she understands her health care, I do not talk down to the backbone of our family.”

INSPIRATION TO GO INTO RADIATION ONCOLOGY

Mirabeau-Beale completed her internship at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and her residency training in radiation oncology at Massachusetts General Hospital, fascinated by the technical aspect of the specialty. While serving her residency, she also completed a master’s in public health, focusing on clinical effectiveness.

Her extensive research on the long-term adjustment of cancer patients after treatment and her involvement in a project with the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute contributed to her decision to pursue oncology. There, she interviewed hundreds of ovarian cancer survivors who were greater than three years out from their treatment. In each six-hour interview, she asked about side effects, depression level and use of complementary therapy. Many patients experienced post-traumatic stress disorder.

“Cancer affects a person’s life for the rest of their life. It was interesting to find this huge psychosocial component.”

She presented her findings at a national meeting and has published extensively on quality of life in female cancer survivors.

During her last year of medical school, she was awarded a palliative care fellowship. She found it deeply satisfying to have frank, honest discussions with patients as they exited the sphere of treatment and a cure.

“It’s not a failure if treatment does not work. It is part of the journey. I want my patients to know that I will always be with them.”

A BLESSED LIFE

Mirabeau-Beale had so much in common with her husband, Dr. Scott Thompson, an orthopedic surgeon, that it felt like she had known him for years when they were both in medical school and met at a Harvard party. They bonded over similar stories as children of Caribbean immigrants. She was drawn to his warm laugh and his positive attitude.

He calls her KMB (he’s Scotty T), fully supportive of her decision to keep her maiden name.

While setting down roots in this community, the couple and their twin sons, Alexander and Andrew, will stay close to extended family. One day, Mirabeau-Beale hopes to take her boys on medical mission trips to Jamaica to visit the villages of their grandparents.

Whether her sons’ dreams include Harvard (or Yale like their father), Mirabeau-Beale hopes that her children become curious people who seek to make a difference and improve the lives of others. ☼

You CAN make a difference

Cancer is the diagnosis that brings everything in life to a grinding halt, turning lives upside down physically, financially and emotionally. The Cancer Alliance of Naples helps to relieve patients’ stress by assisting patients with mounting bills and by providing free group counseling, nutrition planning and college scholarships for cancer survivors.

Dr. Mirabeau-Beale often refers patients to CAN for support.

“As doctors, we are focused on a solution and are fixated on treatment. But what about transportation? What about the fact that you can’t work or pay your light bill? What I love about CAN is that they help patients with the other stuff that is so important.”

Volunteers help with the reception desk, telephones, mailings, data entry or event planning throughout the year. To donate a few hours a week or to purchase tickets for upcoming events, contact CAN at (239) 643-HOPE (4673).

Women Supporting Women Luncheon and Fashion Show to benefit CAN

Fri., March 2

Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Tickets: \$200