atta boy!

good fun medicine

BY ELIZABETH COSSICK

AS A PARAMEDIC, MALCOLM BARFIELD OFTEN DELIVERED BABIES IN ODD PLACES: in the back of an ambulance (many times!), in parking lots, and even once in the back of a Ford Escort. Along with relief, his thought after each one was, "I will never be an OB-GYN!"

So, how did he become one of Georgia's finest OB-GYNs?

"During my residency at Emory, I got to deliver babies in an actual delivery room—imagine that! I discovered that the hospital birth experience is much different than the back of a car. Plus," he adds with a laugh, "women are just better patients. Big surprise, but they're much better listeners."

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The best medicine

Perhaps it's Dr. Barfield's sense of humor that has endeared him to so many patients at Cartersville Ob/Gyn over the years. It certainly helps at home with his wife Kitti (who's a family physician) and their two boys, Jacob, 9, and Jason, 14, who attend North Cobb Christian School in Kennesaw. "In our family, laughter is sometimes the best medicine," says the hands-on dad.

But this doesn't mean he lacks a serious side, especially as he helps women surmount tough issues like infertility, hysterectomies and chronic endometriosis. His passion for resolving these issues led him and colleague Dr. Hugo Ribot to found the Georgia Advanced Surgery Center for Women in Cartersville, which has gained a national reputation. Patients often travel from other states (and, sometimes, countries) for the center's specialty: minimally invasive laparoscopies.

The best in his field

Dr. Barfield is among the select few surgeons in the nation who can perform complex surgeries with minimal invasiveness (think: tiny incision, less pain, quick recovery). This includes hysterectomies, infertility surgeries, endometrial ablations, endometriosis pain surgeries, incontinence procedures, pelvic reconstruction, tubal reversals and fibroid removal. "For hysterectomies, many surgeons still do a C-section scar, but we do it laparoscopically, which means our patients go home within a couple of hours and with virtually zero complications," explains Dr. Barfield.

Plus, there's no hospital overhead, so procedures are a fraction of the cost. "There are lots of ways to practice medicine, but I try to do it with the most accuracy, least pain and least financial concern to my patients as possible," he says.

Which brings him to the final reason he loves being an OB-GYN: "There's closure. With most medicine, it's hard to 'fix' chronic conditions. But with me, I get to deliver babies. I get to heal issues and remove pain. It's good fun medicine." ●

Make an appointment with Dr. Barfield by calling 770-386-4824. The Georgia Advanced Surgery Center for Women is located north on Hwy 41 at 958-A Joe Frank Harris Pkwy, Cartersville, 30120; ***ga-advancedsurgerycenter.com.***

Top: Dr. Malcom Barfield with wife Dr. Kitti Barfield. *Left:* Dr. Barfield and family. Photography by Jennifer Harris