

Valley Women's Center Welcomes Dr. Sharon Bush-Coaxum, MD

It is hard to believe when you meet her that Dr. Sharon Bush-Coaxum has been a doctor long enough to have delivered at least 700 babies. "I don't keep count," she said with a smile, "but I know it's at least that many." As of this writing, Dr. Sharon has been at the Valley Women's Center, located just east of the Athens Publix Shopping Center on Hwy 72, for a little over a week. She is a young doctor who has wisdom and experience beyond her years, and a passion to help her patients in ways I'll explain further below.

Dr. Bush-Coaxum is a native of Mobile, Alabama, and always knew she wanted to do something that would truly make a difference. It was her pediatrician who planted in her the seed of possibility with regard to becoming a doctor, and indeed, Sharon is the first physician in her entire family! She received her undergraduate degree in biology from Tuskegee, and went to medical school at the University of South Alabama. She did her residency and internship at Tulane University, (where she delivered her first 500 babies) and practiced in Enterprise, AL for four years before coming to Athens. She had strongly considered becoming a pediatrician, but it wasn't until her OB rotation while in medical school that she knew she had found "it;" the specialty she was put on this earth to practice.

Dr. Bush-Coaxum is a fellow with the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology, holds an Alabama Medical license and is a member of the American Medical Association. During her residency, she was the recipient of the Council on Resident Education in Obstetrics and Gynecology (CREOG) 2013 Excellent Performance Award. She did research while at Tulane on the differences in perspectives between the North and the South regarding Cesarean deliveries. While at SUNY in Buffalo, NY, she wrote papers on the effects of methamphetamines on sperm, and the effects of the endocannabinoids in marijuana on human umbilical cord blood.

To say that Dr. Bush-Coaxum has many interests and that her CV is fascinating is an understatement. We talked at length about her love for flying, which has translated into her currently completing the process of joining the United States Air Force Reserves. She'll be serving out of Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, and will train there one weekend a month and two weeks a year. She wants to become a flight surgeon, is interested in expanding her skill set by studying field medicine, and she also wants to fly airplanes! "That (piloting a plane) won't happen for a few years," she told me, but I am sure it will be worth the wait, given her love for flight. With regard to the unusual things she has done as a result of studying medicine, Dr. Bush-Coaxum is also certified as a medical examiner.

Dr. Bush-Coaxum is married to Louis Coaxum, who is a lawyer in partnership with his brother. They met in college and she says, "It was love at first sight." At the moment they are the proud parents of "fur babies," but are looking forward to someday raising a family here in Athens.

Dr. Sharon has a vision for her patients that has, in part, been "birthed" as a result of the high level of obesity amongst women in the state of Alabama. She makes it her responsibility to educate her patients as to the risks in pregnancy that are increased by obesity, and the effect it has on mothers as well as babies. "I use a lot of hand outs, and do my best to make sure my patients' questions are answered. I found early in my career that many women would go to the doctor and not have a clue what they were

being told about their medical condition or the treatments they would receive. They wouldn't even know what questions to ask, and weren't comfortable in asking anything" she said, and that was something she set out to change. "I had to deal with a lot of misunderstandings that women have, such as the idea that exercise is not good for you when you are pregnant. I am all about preventative care, being active and getting good nutrition, because it makes such a big difference" she said.

Interestingly, Dr. Bush-Coaxum's vision is the same for women who are dealing with menopause. "It's still about prevention and fighting obesity, she said. "Anything that women face is going to be affected by obesity, but it's not about the weight, it's about building health," she added. She also has a great interest in adolescent gynecology, and loves to help young women really understand what is happening in their bodies. After all, it was her own pediatrician that set this whole dream-come-true regarding becoming a doctor in motion, and out of gratitude, Dr. Sharon wants to keep paying it forward here in Athens, AL. If this is the type of OB/GYN that you have been looking for, then call the Valley Women's Center today at 256-233-5000, and make an appointment to see Dr. Sharon Bush-Coaxum.

Valley Women's Center

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256-233-5000

Mon-Thu 8-5, Fri 8-12