



Angela Pratt M.D.

MEDICINE, BEAUTY &
HAWAIIAN ROYALTY

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Photos by GIL COPE



An unmistakable feminine physician, Dr. Angela Pratt is trailblazing the world of medicine. Blending her distinguished surgeon savvy, women's health finesse and benevolent community sensibility, this ravishing superwoman is armed with raw roots intuition and a royal lineage stemming from Kaua'i.

Currently the first native Hawaiian *and* female to fill the esteemed position as the Department Chair of Obstetrics/Gynecology at the Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children on O'ahu, Dr. Pratt is a private physician specializing in women's health and an internationally-revered expert of advanced minimally invasive surgery. Her poised pioneering spirit was cultured in the humble soils of Pākālā—a quaint Kaua'i plantation village. Dr. Pratt's honorable reputation reflects a heartfelt practice that transforms the women of today while echoing the essence of her ancestry.

"Medicine, for me, is a calling. Every patient that I touch has the legacy that is behind the forefathers of my native Hawaiian roots, my profession, and all the women that taught me so much—that legacy moves through me," she expresses.

It's no surprise that Dr. Pratt feels at home at Kapi'olani, since she first visited the hospital in utero when her mother, Barbara, was six months pregnant. Due to an unfortunate car accident, Barbara was required to undergo surgery and Dr. Pratt survived—undeterred by the lack of medical advancements of the era. A true depiction of her character, she attributes this unfaltering perseverance to her mother, a key motivating force of her achievements.

"I draw from my mother's strength and amazing groundedness. She is what really gave me that sense of 'ohana and keeping my roots intact."

Beyond the bright-hued homes that line the rugged village road, the charmingly rustic grounds of Pākālā Village hold a precious history that endures even the passing of time. This heritage-rich neighborhood is the origin of Dr. Pratt's family antiquity that instilled a pivotal foundation for the successes in her life.

"Kaua'i was the place where we would go back to our roots and step on the soil where our family began. When you stood on the soil of Kaua'i, you remembered that things come from the land, and that you draw your strength from Mother Nature. It brought me back to the simple things in life. I was so proud to be of the land there."

A quiet respite next to her contemporary, yet poverty-marked youth in Kāne'ohe, O'ahu, Dr. Pratt's childhood visits to Pākālā slow-moving stomping grounds became her second home. Her family, including her five brothers, made frequent excursions for reunions, weddings, lū'au, fisherman's longings, and time with Uncle Merlin, her father's eldest brother. Dr. Pratt was captivated by Uncle Merlin's colorful stories of the old plantation days and tales of Pratt nobility.

The daughter of a native Hawaiian woodsman and a dynamic southern-born mother committed to perpetuating family ethics, Dr. Pratt was fortunate to attend Kamehameha Schools, where her love of hula blossomed. Beginning at the age of four, Dr. Pratt performed weekly, and excelled in numerous genres of Polynesian dance (like Tahitian and Maori) that she could share with her 'ohana on Kaua'i.

Warm, homey gatherings at Uncle Merlin and Auntie Myrtle's pastoral Pākālā Village abode were filled with 'ukulele strumming, singing, hula dancing, stringing Ni'ihau shell lei, extended family, and sumptuous local cuisine like ocean-fresh ahi, crab and 'opihi. Through Uncle Merlin's enjoyable storytelling, Dr. Pratt learned about her aristocratic lineage that originated from her great great grandmother, Princess Elizabeth Keka'aniauokalani Kalaninuioni Lau Kapu La'anui Pratt.

A princess alongside other royalty like Bernice Pauahi Bishop, Elizabeth Keka'aniauokalani Kalaninuioni Lau Kapu La'anui Pratt was a direct descendant of King Kamehameha the Great. As a member of the Kamehameha Dynasty, she was one of the ten elites chosen to attend the Royal School. An avid proponent of native Hawaiian rights, she eventually respectfully declined a "stately queen-like position" offer from Queen Lili'uokalani.

Falling in love with an English whaling captain, Princess Waiali'i (a cousin of Elizabeth Keka'aniauokalani Kalaninuioni Lau Kapu La'anui Pratt) married Dr. Pratt's great great grandfather, Thomas, who built St. Raphael's Church—one of Kaua'i's oldest cathedrals located on Kōloa Plantation. Thomas' funding and organizational capacities assisted with the growth of religion and the origins of the plantation itself. He also owned a general store and boarding house for supervisors,

A strapping man, Thomas advocated the harmonious interplay of diverse ethnicities,



and worked together with his fellow native Hawaiians to construct the walls of St. Raphael's. This 'ohana-guided paradigm, spanning across all cultures, became a pillar of Pratt morality.

"My forefathers were very progressive thinkers and they weren't afraid. It really showed me that anything is possible and taught me to stand strong when things didn't come easy," she explains.

During the laborious Kōloa plantation days, Uncle Merlin also recalled distinct memories of the Taniguchi family. Since Dr. Pratt's auntie married a Taniguchi, the families mingled traditions and created a lasting bond. While the Pratts founded and labored the plantation, the Taniguchis cared for the livestock and ranching as bona fide paniolos (cowboys). This unique kindred collaboration found form in Dr. Pratt's exhilarating childhood adventures on Kaua'i, like when she and her mother rode horses with the Taniguchis and learned the paniolo ways. Sentiment-rich memories like these

catapulted Dr. Pratt's young life forward with an unshakeable set of family values.

"Uncle Merlin would talk about the turn of the century and that we try our best to preserve our native Hawaiian language and culture—I knew I needed to keep those treasures very close to my heart. I had to mold to the western way, but hold on to my native Hawaiian roots."

Considering her modest childhood, it was an accomplishment when Dr. Pratt graduated from Kamehameha in 1980. Influenced by an innate fascination with the human body and her father's aspiration to be a doctor, her dream of medicine blossomed. After being discouraged by a presumptuous school counselor and told that she wasn't suited to be a physician, her hopes were tainted. With lingering confusion, that advice shaped the beginning of Dr. Pratt's educational endeavors—though her true ambition never diminished.

Studying business and biology at the University of Puget Sound in Washington, Dr. Pratt eventually graduated pre-med and returned back to O'ahu. After a stint aboard a Big Island fishing boat (where she caught an 848 lb blue pacific marlin), Dr. Pratt began working for Hawaiian Airlines. Her extensive travels allowed for the exploration of all the islands in the Pacific Basin, where she was exposed to the poor state of health and living conditions of the indigenous communities.

"When I saw the lack of health care for the Polynesians, I said to myself, 'You need to do





something. You need to stand up.' It wasn't only for my lineage, but for all native people. I wanted to blend the western way of medicine with the eastern ways of nontraditional healing," she says devotedly.

Fueled by her heredity and an undeniable eagerness to transform health conditions in underserved areas, Dr. Pratt became involved in the world of pageantry. As Miss Honolulu 1986, she also competed for the Miss Hawai'i title, where she was runner up and awarded the David B. Altman scholarship to pursue her passion—medicine. Subsequently Mrs. Hawai'i 1992, Dr. Pratt understood the countless benefits that pageants revealed, and she is an distinguished board member of the Miss Hawai'i USA organization today.

Before crowning her personal experiences with steady involvement in pageantry, Dr. Pratt first completed her rigorous medical training at the University of Hawai'i, John A. Burns School of Medicine (which also included a Native Hawaiian Health scholarship). A participant in the stringent 'Imi Ho'ōla Post-Baccalaureate Program, she also had many native Hawaiian mentors along the way—notably the physician and acclaimed historian, Dr. Ben Young.

Complementing her academic livelihood, she became the confidant for innumerable young women competing in pageants. Dr. Pratt's presence with the Miss Hawai'i USA organization hails from over 15 years of experience as a travel companion and mentor for ladies, including judging on the



Portrait: Princess Elizabeth Keka'aniauokalani Kalaninuiohi Lau Kapu La'anui Pratt
(on display at the Kawaiha'o Church in Honolulu)

state and national level. Her astute pageantry swank comes from an informed understanding of its poignant value.

“Pageants allow young women to develop themselves by becoming self-aware, building confidence and learning about the community. It’s an evaluation of yourself at the moment and who you want to be. You have to define your goals and actively think about your career aspirations, while polishing yourself and articulating your ideas. Community involvement is also a huge benefit, where you give back and interface with people and organizations that create longstanding relationships,” she describes.

Now a Kapi‘olani Medical Center luminary, Dr. Pratt is a woman unlike any other—redefining the status quo and in vogue all the while. Opening her private practice in 2002, the hospital represents a symbolic full circle of Dr. Pratt’s existence, beginning in her mother’s womb, continuing through residency, and culminating in a fortuitous practice that thrives today. Her stylishly keen discernment touts the importance of connecting heart-to-heart with each of her patients.

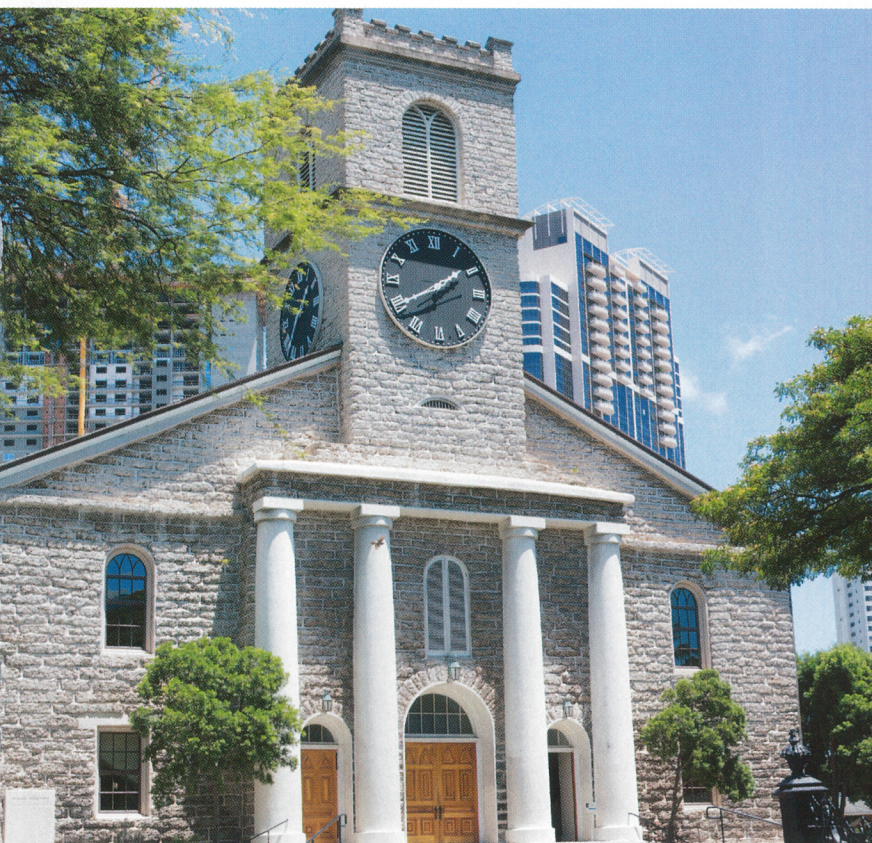
“Women are the gatekeepers for health in the family unit—they are always evaluating and

refining. I realize the struggle that women have... we want to be the best friend, best daughter, best mother, best wife and best career woman. I want to make these women healthy so that they can fulfill their life’s work, take care of our children, and make this community a better place. My patients are my extended family.”

Dr. Pratt’s comforting rapport serves adolescent to geriatric patients, and she offers wide-ranging women’s health services—from well-woman examinations to gynecologic problems like endometriosis and infertility. Delivering babies in her *Ferragamos* cannot go without mention—a signature for this chic mama-amorous doctor.

“I don’t think I’ll ever stop delivering babies...I feel forever attached to each child. Every time a child is born it’s like a rebirth of women and the human race, with the promise we’re going to keep evolving into something better.”

A core memento for busy women of today, Dr. Pratt affirms, is the crucial self-love and care that is neglected by most. As women learn to nurture themselves, the people in their lives are nurtured alongside them. She stresses the importance for women to set aside twenty minutes of their day, regardless of the “boiling pot” and “screaming kids,”



Kawaiha'o Church, Honolulu



to reflect on where their life is headed by reading, exercising, doing yoga or meditating.

“Healthy is the new sexy. This is not only health in the physical body, but with mentation, spirit and soul. We are living in an amazing time where women are actually evolving to have that,” she advocates.

Perhaps her most noted expertise is in advanced minimally invasive surgery, an innovative way to operate through the belly button with rapid recovery. Instructing on a national level at the American Association of Gynecologic Laparoscopists Global Congress, Dr. Pratt also serves as a clinical assistant professor with the University of Hawai‘i and is a designated Kahuna Lā‘au Lapa‘au.

Launching a new-fashioned extension of her services, the Hawai‘i Beauty and Wellness Center, Dr. Pratt is enthusiastic about sharing this fusion of her meticulous surgical skill set and aesthetic discernment. Incorporating principles from eastern and western medicine, the center offers nutrition education, nontraditional acupuncture, bioidentical hormones, dermal fillers, cosmetic gynecology and more. She encourages women to “feel good about their bodies, and if there’s something bothering them, to investigate it shamelessly.”

Reflecting a journey woven with trepidation and native roots perseverance, Dr. Pratt has been the recipient of many prestigious awards, particularly the Legacy Award in 2010, yearly Patients’ Choice Awards since 2007, a feature on Good Morning America, and the designation as one of America’s Top Ten Doctors for several years and counting, just to name a few.

Obviously, a trendsetting practitioner like Dr. Pratt doesn’t have much room for leisure. Most of her “spare time” is spent supporting various community non-profits and organizations like the American Heart Association, the Hawai‘i Food Bank, the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and more. She also supports many events at Kapi‘olani, like the Children’s Miracle Network and the Campaign for Hawai‘i’s Children.

An ocean-lover, Dr. Pratt enjoys her precious moments outside of the office by fishing and boating, world traveling, sipping fine glasses of Pinot Noir, and quality time split between her 10 Maltese dogs and her daughter, Micaela Wai‘ali‘i Po‘omahealani. Fluent in four languages, Micaela is 20 years old and currently studies International

Business at Linfield College in Portland, Oregon.

With an unwavering legacy that sweeps back generations, the Pratt family radiates an everlasting footprint that emerges from the soils of Kaua‘i. A nonpareil home for the industrious Dr. Pratt, the island forevermore exhales a breath of remembrance.

“Medicine is a very demanding career, and you need a place to recharge—that place for me is Kaua‘i. I go to Kaua‘i to regain my purpose and be reminded of who I am. We are all born with dreams, and I am so grateful to be living mine.” ■

