



Carmen Gonzalez Keelan, MD, FCAP

### **Keeping It Interesting**

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Carmen Gonzalez Keelan, MD, FCAP  
On why she has been voted “outstanding professor” six times

Carmen Gonzalez Keelan, MD, FCAP, completed CAP Spokesperson’s training a few years ago; she recently taped a live television presentation and several radio spots. “I am at a point in my life and career where I can do what I please because I have a more flexible schedule,” says Dr. Gonzalez Keelan, a former professor of pathology and current consulting pathologist at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR). “I decided to become a CAP spokesperson because I think physicians have a social responsibility to educate the community, particularly because alternative medicine is given more media time and attention than scientifically proven facts.”

UPR offers the television programs as a community service, Dr. Gonzalez Keelan says. For her spot, she partnered with a gastroenterologist colleague. “The gastroenterologist is an expert in colon cancer, and I talked about skin cancer prevention and breast and cervical cancer screening,” she says. “At the end, we accepted live questions. We were a good team.”

Dr. Gonzalez Keelan taped the 90-second CAP radio spots in Spanish, because, she says, “The CAP has many pathologists who can do things very well in English. [In Spanish] I can reach a different audience.” The CAP provided a list of topics and guidelines for the radio spots. “I took the subjects I felt more comfortable with,” Dr. Gonzalez Keelan says. “I talked about skin cancer, cervical cancer, and breast cancer, reminding patients to get their mammograms.”

She has time for this, Dr. Gonzalez Keelan insists, because she is retired. She says this with emphasis, as if concerned that it might be unclear. And her fears are well founded; in fact, her insistence on the point is something of an exercise in futility.

True, since dropping to a part-time consulting status in February, Dr. Gonzalez Keelan is no longer a full professor at the UPR School of Medicine, where she taught, practiced, and conducted research for 24 years. She has fewer clinical responsibilities now. But retired? Not so much.

“Yes, I am still teaching,” Dr. Gonzalez Keelan admits. “But I decided to retire because I am a grandmother. So I work two and a half days at the medical school.”

Dr. Gonzalez Keelan’s appetite for knowledge, for novelty, and for technology has fostered innovation in her teaching and the deep affection of her students, who voted six times to name her the outstanding

professor of the second year of medical studies, the required overview course for which she is lead faculty.

“I try to develop different strategies for different students because they learn in different ways. I try to implement new ideas continuously to keep it interesting,” Dr. Gonzalez Keelan says. “Every year, I have tried to introduce a new technology.”

She was an early member of Group Research in Pathology Education (GRIFE), an international collaborative of pathologists who meet annually to accelerate information-sharing and provide a network of knowledgeable peers. In 2006, she says proudly, they met at the University of Puerto Rico.

“They are always developing new strategies,” Dr. Gonzalez Keelan says of her friends in GRIFE. “They have a question bank with images for your courses, along with new ideas and teaching innovations. That is how we brought in video lectures and learned about the virtual microscope.”

There are 11 pathology residents this year, all of whom have the benefit of the collaborative and interdisciplinary learning opportunities that are built into the curriculum. “Once a month we have a multidisciplinary meeting where radiologists, gastroenterologists, surgeons, and pathologists discuss the cases,” Dr. Gonzalez Keelan says, and it’s standing room only. “I still supervise autopsies—right now mostly GI and liver pathology, and we have a weekly conference on GI. Every two months we meet to discuss the liver biopsies; we have a strong interest group.”

“I give my students a safe environment where they can be honest,” Dr. Gonzalez Keelan says. “I expect them to work hard. I expect them to respect their colleagues, the personnel, the patients, and the physicians whom we serve.”

Asked about the teaching awards, she is somewhat dismissive. “The students are like my children; I try to be a good mother, and they recognize that effort,” she says. “I get more from the students than I give them,” she adds with her voice dropping as if disclosing a secret, “but they don’t know that.”

Well, they probably don’t know that she is retired either.