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BIKERS VS. MOTORISTS  
—WHO RULES  
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**IN GOOD HANDS**  
DR. HOLLY S. PURITZ M.D.  
THE GROUP FOR WOMEN

Dr. Puritz



# Top Doc For Women

DR. HOLLY S. PURITZ PROVIDES CARE FOR WOMEN OF ALL STAGES AND BRINGS GENERATIONS OF BABIES INTO THE WORLD

By Patti Hinson

**In 1987,** Dr. Holly Puritz became the first female physician to join The Group for Women, a Hampton Roads practice for obstetrics and gynecology which has been in existence for more than 100 years. Since that time, she has become a sought-after OB/GYN in Hampton Roads and beyond, caring for women in all stages of life, delivering generations of babies and serving as an advocate for women's healthcare in community, state and national spheres. She is committed to addressing issues of patient safety, education and access to care; promoting childhood immunizations; and finding ways to reduce infant mortality. These concerns are real and can be daunting, but Puritz meets the challenges with genuine passion and enthusiasm for the work that she does. "I count myself as extremely lucky," she says. "After all these years I wake up in the morning and truly love to go to work."

**Why medicine?** "Ever since high school, I have wanted a career helping people—I thought about teaching children with developmental delays or studying physical therapy. And my father, a furniture salesman, encouraged me to think about medicine. As he told me often, 'reach for the top.'"

**Why obstetrics/gynecology?** "I initially wanted to do neurology because the pathophysiology was fascinating, but then I did a surgical rotation which I really enjoyed. In OB/GYN, I found the perfect mix—I loved the combination of medical and surgical care, and I loved forming long-term relationships with patients, something that rarely happens in a surgical practice. The older I get, the more I love obstetrics. Delivering babies is an extremely fulfilling part of my practice, as is taking care of my OB patients for the duration of their pregnancies. I'm also delivering babies of 'babies' I delivered years ago, which is great."

**Promotes:** Comprehensive care and advocacy. "For most of my patients, I am the doctor they see yearly, not their primary care physician. So, in addition to the OB/GYN care I provide, I try very hard to stay on top of preventative health recommendations and make sure my patients are keeping up with those as well." Involvement with the business and advocacy side of medicine is another passion of Puritz's. "In this current political climate it's very important that informed, educated voices are speaking up on women's health issues. I'm currently vice chair for ACOG [The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists] in Virginia and will be chair for 2013–2016. I also serve on ACOG's national government affairs committee, which lobbies in Washington, D.C. for women's healthcare."

**Why Hampton Roads?** "My husband and I came here in 1983. I wanted to do a fellowship in IVF [in vitro fertilization], and this was the place to do it at that time. I found out that I loved OB/GYN in its entirety and didn't want to specialize. I was asked to join a great practice and never left."

**Exercise and fun:** Cooking, knitting and gardening ("digging in the dirt").

**Years in practice:** Private practice for 25 years preceded by a four-year residency.

**Medical school:** Tufts University School of Medicine, Boston, Mass.

**Board certifications:** Fellow, American College of OB/GYN, board-certified in obstetrics and gynecology.

**Family:** Husband, Stephen Wohlgenuth, M.D., F.A.C.S., surgeon and director, Sentara Metabolic & Weight Loss Program, married ("very happily") for 30 years; two children, Zach, 25 (a first-year medical student), and Leah, 23 (currently pursuing a master's degree in public health with a focus on international health). **HRM**