



ONE TO WATCH

JESSICA SCHIFFBAUER, OD, FAAO, DIPL ABO

Please share with us your background.

I grew up on a farm in a small town about 90 miles southwest of Chicago. I completed my undergraduate studies at the University of Illinois, where I originally planned to attend veterinary school. However, after shadowing a few optometrists in my local area, I changed course to prepare for optometry school. I attended the New England College of Optometry, and after graduation, I completed an ocular disease residency at Omni Eye Services in Atlanta.

Describe your current position.

I am an assistant professor and the chief of Optometry Services at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. I work with multiple optometrists and ophthalmologists to teach and mentor medical and optometry students and residents. Most of the examinations I perform are medically focused, whether that be managing patients' glaucoma, retinal conditions, or ocular surface disease. We also see many new and ER patients to determine whether they need further evaluation and/or treatment with the appropriate specialty.

Who are your mentors?

Paul C. Ajamian, OD, and Walt Whitley, OD, MBA, FAAO, have continuously instilled their passion for optometry by encouraging and challenging me every step of the

way. Without these two individuals, I wouldn't be where I am today.

What has been the most memorable experience of your career thus far?

Completing my residency. During my last year of optometry school, I wasn't sure what path I was headed towards. On a 3-hour car ride to New York, a classmate I was traveling with inspired me to apply for a residency. That experience has helped define my career path and continues to open doors for me, whether it be job opportunities or networking.

What are some new technological advances that you find particularly exciting? Which advances in the pipeline are you most enthusiastic or curious about?

I think virtual reality perimetry will provide us with accurate and accessible testing results, especially for individuals who are handicapped or have difficulty with positioning in the standard visual field machine.

Additionally, I look forward to seeing where the pipeline treatments for geographic atrophy take us. I think one of the hardest things to tell patients is that there's nothing we can do to prevent their condition from progressing. However, the future looks promising, and hopefully we can continue to improve quality of life for these

patients by preserving their vision for a longer period of time.

Describe a typical day in your life.

I usually wake up early and go to the gym before heading into work. Four days out of the week, I see patients, and on the fifth day, I complete administrative tasks, such as meeting with colleagues, coordinating clinic flow, and working on different projects. When I am not working, I relax, play trivia, and watch or play different sports, whether it be volleyball, softball, or golf. I am also busy completing coursework towards my MBA degree.

What advice can you offer to individuals who are just now choosing their career paths after finishing optometry school or a residency?

I highly recommend completing a residency, whether you want to expand upon your skillset or you're unsure of where your future lies. Take advantage of any networking opportunities—oh, the people you will meet and the places you will go! I believe that residency and networking will set you up for success in your career goals. ■

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