



ONE TO WATCH

JEFF BANAS, OD

Please share with us your background.

I was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois. As a child, I wanted to be a meteorologist, and I am still fascinated with severe weather. I have always loved the outdoors, so fishing trips with my father and/or my grandfather were frequent occurrences. I also spent a lot of time gaming for fun, and I've loved to cook since I was a child. I attended the Illinois College of Optometry, where I graduated in 2016.

Describe your current position.

I have been working at the Eye Centers of Racine and Kenosha (ECRK) since 2018. We are an MD/OD private practice with an emphasis on refractive and glaucoma surgery. I practice full-scope medical optometry for all ages, although my patients are primarily geriatric. I typically see between 35 and 50 patients a day.

Who are your mentors?

Inder Paul Singh, MD, MPH, and Krishna Sanka, MD. I received a great foundational education in optometry school, but Drs. Singh and Sanka took me to the next level by solidifying my medical optometry understanding. They are also a part of our practice, so I see them frequently, and we discuss patient care together.

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

Right out of optometry school, I worked in a retail practice setting, which limited how much medical

optometry I could practice. One Friday afternoon, a younger patient stopped in my office complaining of color changes in his vision. After thorough examination, I discovered his IOP was almost 70 mm Hg! I contacted Dr. Singh, as his office was a referral location, and promptly got the patient over to him for management. Dr. Singh ended up treating the patient with minimally invasive glaucoma surgery, and this patient is now my patient at ECRK. To this day, the patient refuses to see anyone but me and Dr. Singh. This was the first strong relationship I can recall establishing with a patient right out of school. I find it very rewarding to know someone trusts in our care so much that they will not see any other eye care provider.

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

The great thing about being on staff at ECRK is we pride ourselves with being on the cutting edge and implementing the latest technology. We are a part of many clinical trials studying new technologies, and I have the privilege of being involved in each of these studies.

I find it hard to choose one single new technology to highlight, but if I had to, I would say one-step limited vitreous removal, which is a new way to remove visually significant floaters.

At ECRK, we are studying the results of this procedure, and I am fortunate to be among the first optometrists to see these patients postoperatively.

Describe a typical day in your life.

I lead a pretty simple life. I get to work by 8:00 am and see patients until 5:00 pm. When I get home, I spend time with my family—especially my 1-year-old daughter—until her bedtime. Once she goes to sleep, I try to chip away at one of my many backlogs, whether that be television shows, movies, games, books, or messing with some new recipe or technique in the kitchen, until it's time for me to go to bed. Then I start the process over the next day.

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

Know and execute your core values. For example, one of my core values is responsibility. I believe we as doctors have a responsibility to our patients, our peers, our supervisors, our critics, our industry, and ourselves to uphold the success we have achieved. I do my best to execute that on a daily basis, and this has brought me success. ■

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- Optometrist, The Eye Centers of Racine and Kenosha, Wisconsin
- jbanas@amazingeye.com
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