



ONE TO WATCH

BOBBY SAENZ, OD, MS, FAAO

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Please share with us your background.

I was born and raised in San Antonio, Texas, with my brother and sister. My brother was born prematurely weighing 1 lb 6 oz and developed retinopathy of prematurity in both eyes. He is completely blind in his left eye and has 20/200 vision in his right eye. This sparked my interest in eyes. I graduated summa cum laude from Abilene Christian (did y'all see March Madness?) and went on to the University of Houston College of Optometry, where I got my master's and doctorate at the same time. After school, I married my high school sweetheart, Lauren, and we have two amazing daughters.

Describe your current position.

I am the clinic and residency director at Parkhurst NuVision in San Antonio. We do a lot of refractive and cataract surgery evaluations, but also oculoplastic, glaucoma, cornea, and advanced dry eye evaluations. We don't do any primary eye care. So, surprisingly for an optometrist, I have never prescribed contacts or glasses.

Who are your mentors?

My first mentor in optometry school was Han Cheng, OD. I loved how she was able to simplify and teach the most relevant material.

When I was studying for boards, I met Kyle Cheatham, OD, the CEO of the educational company KMK Optometry, and he invited me to a Fellowship of

Christian Optometrists meeting. I used to think I wanted to be *the doctor*, but I've learned that I can make a greater impact if I help other doctors to develop the same skill set I have.

I wouldn't be where I am today without the doctors at the Eye Center of Texas in Houston. Lastly, Greg Parkhurst, MD, has advanced my knowledge of refractive surgery and of business and practice management.

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

I've been able to watch Anthony Vanrachack, OD, and Alexandra Wiechmann, OD, become wizards with refractive surgery consultations and preoperative evaluations and Thomas Nettleton, OD, become a cataract surgery consultation guru.

Also, watching members of my family undergo refractive surgery. My wife can see better after her phakic IOL surgery than with her -6.50 D glasses, and my mom is no longer a hyperopic presbyope after trifocal IOL implantations.

Which advances in the pipeline are you most enthusiastic or curious about?

Presbyopic eye drops and the Evo Visian ICL (Staar Surgical). We were part of the clinical trial for the presbyopic drops that are likely to be approved first. I think these drops will augment our current therapies.

The Visian ICL phakic IOL is a great

technology for patients with myopia and myopic astigmatism. I've heard surgeons say they think this procedure will overtake LASIK, so I'm hoping to educate ODs to be ready to comanage these patients.

Describe a typical day in your life.

The morning is important: We decide whether we are going to have pancakes or breakfast tacos. Isabella, 4, and Sophia, 2, typically pick tacos. Once that decision is made, I head to work. Work is busy, and we are always looking for ways to grow and get better. After work, we have tee-ball practice or we watch Frozen before the girls head to bed.

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

At the end of the day, it comes down to, "What do I want to do?" If you don't know, shadow and talk to as many doctors as you can. When you see a doctor you really admire and you think, "That's what I want to do," there's your answer. ■

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