



ONE TO WATCH

EMILIE K. SEITZ, OD

supported by
 **Allergan**
 an AbbVie company

Please share with us your background.

I grew up in a small suburb of Cleveland, Ohio. I was very active, skiing in the winter and playing volleyball in the summer. I was also involved in music theater, which helped me find my voice and develop confidence. I completed my undergrad at The Ohio State University and obtained my doctorate from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Salus University.

Describe your current position.

I've had the unique opportunity to become a 1099 contractor over the past 9 months for three separate employers. It has given me the chance to learn specialty dry eye from Melanie Denton, OD, FAAO, at her boutique practice, Salisbury Eyecare & Eyewear; ruminate rural medical cases with David L. King, OD (King Eye Center); and hustle hard alongside corporate doctors such as Ryan LeBlanc, OD, and his group at See Well Vision Associates.

I have recently signed a contract with University Eye Associates, a well-established private practice in Charlotte, North Carolina. I love collaborative care and will be working with them to create inter-referral systems.

Who are your mentors?

Dr. Denton has been a huge mentor as a woman in business. She took me under her wing this year and set me up with a financial advising group, taught me about pro formas, and

helped me strategize how to conquer student loan debt.

I'm also involved in a running group chat with Inna Lazar, OD; Carly Rose, OD, FAAO; Damaris Raymondi, OD; and Jaclyn Garlich, OD, FAAO. We're all trying to navigate new roles as *Medfluencers*, so the ability to bounce ideas off one another has been invaluable. We hold nothing back, and I think it's representative of just how much the younger generation of optometrists can achieve when open to sharing.

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

Being approached to create *Modern Optometry's* Medical Millennial video series on Eyetube. I was 6 months into my residency and going through a bit of a new practitioner identity crisis. It was this moment of, "Wait, why me?" The opportunity has given me a great way to explore topics I've been interested in, and I hope it's empowering other young practitioners as well.

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

Novel drug delivery. I fully acknowledge that's a nerdy answer, but as someone with dry eye, I empathize with patients who struggle with compliance or ocular toxicity. In the way that practitioners before OCT longed to see the layers of

the retina," I also long for a day in my career when eye drops become obsolete.

Describe a typical day in your life.

I'm most creative during my morning commute, so I often hit "voice record" and talk through my ideas out loud. At lunchtime, I try to catch up on EyeSeitz-related tasks, whether that's emailing, Instagramming, or brainstorming for Medical Millennial. Right now, my days feel a lot like: work, eat, sleep, repeat, so I've been trying to find little ways to break up the cycle. On Wednesday evenings I play sand volleyball and on Thursdays, I take Spanish lessons.

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

Now is the time to take risks and experience as much as you can. I never thought I'd like working for a corporate PLLC or that I had enough business acumen to create an S corporation until I tried. Don't simply seek the opportunities that satisfy where you are *now* in your career, instead, pursue ventures that help you *evolve* into the optometrist you want to become. ■

EMILIE K. SEITZ, OD

- Associate Optometrist, University Eye Associates, Charlotte, North Carolina
- emilieseitzod@gmail.com; Instagram @eyeseyitz
- Financial disclosure: None