



ONE TO WATCH

JESSILIN QUINT, OD, MS, MBA, FAAO

supported by
 **Allergan**
 an AbbVie company

Please share with us your background.

I grew up in a small town north of Amarillo, Texas, with a culture rooted in ranching agriculture, Tex-Mex food, southern manners, high school football games, and the annual rodeo.

I graduated from Baylor University with a degree in biology and afterward enrolled in a biochemistry PhD program there, with plans of becoming a chemist for a cosmetic company. However, I didn't realize that spending hours running polymerase chain reaction tests, pipetting, and cloning and isolating gene sequences did not involve much social interaction.

When I began exploring alternative career paths, the optometrists I shadowed made the profession seem glamorous. So I turned the business classes I was taking into an MBA with a health care management emphasis, pursued a master's in molecular biology, and applied to Indiana University School of Optometry. The rest is history.

Describe your current position.

I am an optometrist and co-owner of Smart Eye Care, an OD-only practice with three locations in Maine, 50 employees, and seven full-time doctors. In Maine, you have to do a little bit of everything. I primarily see patients with dry eye disease and fit specialty contact lenses. Most recently, we opened Smart Eye & Med Spa, a clinical practice focused on dry eye disease and aesthetics.

Who are your mentors?

I shadowed Brandon W. Dabney, OD, and Melanie McCarty Thompson, OD, two clinicians who are passionate about optometry and have a great work-life balance. I have other mentors for the business, fitness, and personal aspects of my life. I value their advice and can't imagine having a better group of professionals to serve as sounding boards for ideas and encouragement.

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

I consider it a great honor to be a business owner and lead a team of people with a mission focused on high-quality patient care, positive company culture, and teamwork. Creating that team and seeing all the good things that come from it has been extraordinary. It makes all the long hours, hard work, and stress of being a business owner worth it.

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

I'm excited for the presbyopia eye drops that should become available this year, a cool option for patients to ditch reading glasses just by putting in an eye drop. I'm also excited for the implications that both artificial intelligence and genomics will have on our industry, allowing earlier disease detection and likely changing treatment approaches.

Describe a typical day in your life.

As a business owner, every day is different, but I typically start at 5:00 am with a group fitness class or Peloton ride. Between 7:00 am and 3:00 pm I see patients, then from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm I take care of business-related tasks. Between 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm I'll eat dinner and either golf, play tennis, go for a hike, do yoga, or socialize with family and friends. I take time to unwind, read, and meditate between 7:00 pm and 9:00 pm, and then it's off to bed.

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

Be excited because optometry is the *best* profession! It's a career that offers a variety of practice modalities, opportunities for change, and colleagues who are supportive and collaborative. Don't forget to give back by volunteering and being proactive in your financial support to your favored causes. Respect, enjoy, embrace, and protect this profession. ■

JESSILIN QUINT, OD, MS, MBA, FAAO

- Owner and Optometrist, Smart Eye Care, Augusta, Bangor, and Farmingdale, Maine
- Member, *Modern Optometry* Editorial Advisory Board
- quint.jessilin@gmail.com; Instagram @jessilinquint
- Financial disclosure: Consultant (Allergan, Alcon, Atlas Ocular, Tarsus)