



IF YOU COULD DO IT ALL AGAIN, WOULD YOU CHOOSE OPHTHALMOLOGY?

BY CARLOS BUZNEGO, MD; P. DEE G. STEPHENSON, MD; AND GEORGE O. WARING IV, MD



CARLOS BUZNEGO, MD

A few weeks ago, I came across a frayed, yellowed newspaper clipping from the *Miami Herald*. Staring back at me was a face I barely recognized. It looked like me but with a whole lot more hair and less mileage than the one that I shave in the morning. The journalist had interviewed the high school valedictorians of

that year. In the article, I said that one of my wishes was that Hispanics and non-Hispanics would learn to get along better. The article also stated, "Carlos plans to attend medical school and become an ophthalmologist."

After 2 decades in ophthalmology, it surprises me that I would say that to the writer. What did I know about ophthalmology? I am the first member of my family to become a physician. Although I was a lifelong contact lens-wearing myope, I had never even seen an ophthalmologist! Little did I know how wise an answer I gave that day.

Despite the naysayers, I would argue that ophthalmology is a great profession for many reasons. We are definitely specialists, but at the same time, we are family doctors who take care of patients across four generations. We are surgeons, but at the same time, we are internists of the eye. We take care of the most important of the senses. We regularly relieve suffering, restore vision, and make the blind see. We use the latest applications in medical technology (lasers, minimally invasive surgery, etc.) before other specialists.

I never thought of myself as clairvoyant, but in that interview, I showed prescience as a high school senior. I became an ophthalmologist, and this morning's *Miami Herald* proclaims that two of my Cuban brethren are within reach of the White House.



P. DEE G. STEPHENSON, MD

I am blessed to have practiced ophthalmology for the past 26 years. This subspecialty has afforded me the time to raise my family as a single parent while practicing the medicine that I love. Technological advances never let the passion that I have for the field become stale. I have been fortunate to work with startup companies and established members of industry on cutting-edge

technologies that have allowed me to be at the forefront of my profession. What other subspecialty could bring to patients such outcomes and improvements in their quality of life?

If I had to do it all over again, ophthalmology would still be the best choice for me. Clinical research, teaching residents, and speaking to and educating my peers across the world are just some things that make me love this profession.



GEORGE O. WARING IV, MD

I would gladly choose ophthalmology if I had to do it all again. Moreover, I would pursue the subspecialties of cornea, cataract, and refractive surgery. Challenges certainly exist in the current medical climate. Loving what I do for a living is a blessing, and it is exactly this that makes the challenges worthwhile. The innovation and technology in this field are fabulous, and being able to bring these to patients and thus profoundly improve their quality of life is a humbling experience. It is an honor to practice among such brilliant minds, and I am grateful to those who paved the way for and continue the evolution of our field. ■

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