

## Gene Cardoz

The first time I used a slit lamp I was struck by the beauty of the iris. I could not have imagined that the human eye had such an intricate and exquisite structure. The ophthalmologist who introduced me to the slit lamp invited me to “shadow” him in his office. I viewed a retina in the teaching head of his indirect ophthalmoscope, watched him laser photocoagulate the vessels of a diabetic patient, and observed the early stages of loss of vision. The tireless effort of this doctor to use his knowledge to help all of his patients inspired me to enter medical school.

My passion for science, which had been fueled during my undergraduate education and my years of basic science research, was ignited in medical school. I was eager to master the massive body of knowledge and apply my fund of knowledge clinically. I began my clinical years determined to remain unbiased as I experienced the various fields of medicine and searched for a match for my interests and ideals. I was enthralled by the elegance of General Surgery and knew I wanted to return to the operating room. I loved the opportunity to work with patients and apply my knowledge and problem solving skills in Pediatrics, Internal Medicine, and Family Medicine, but I felt that the broad scope and minimal procedural orientation of these fields was not a good fit for me.

As I entered my third year I knew I wanted to find a specialty that would allow me to work directly with patients, apply my knowledge of basic sciences, master a specific field, and explore new technologies. I began to think about my early experience “shadowing” my ophthalmologist, and decided to seek his guidance. He introduced me to an attending ophthalmologist at Northwestern University Hospital who became an important mentor. He introduced me to basic texts and guided the continuing complexity of my reading. I attended clinics with him, watched him in the operating room, and quickly felt at home with the procedures and the science.

My fourth year Ophthalmology rotation confirmed my commitment to the specialty. I was fascinated by the technology and the procedures I encountered, and I liked the focus and complexity of the problem solving. I saw an opportunity to be a part of a profession that had a profound impact on the lives of patients from infancy through old age. The strong service orientation I observed confirmed that Ophthalmology was a good fit for my interests and needs.

My research in surgical enucleation techniques provided additional depth to my appreciation of the impact of ophthalmology on the lives of patients. Subsequent participation in a group presentation at a regional conference illustrated the opportunities that a career in Ophthalmology will offer me to continue my interests in basic science research.

I am looking for a residency program that will provide rigorous, comprehensive ophthalmologic training with an emphasis on sub-specialties and ample research opportunities. At this time, I intend to pursue a fellowship, and become an academic ophthalmologist. My goal is to be able to have direct clinical contact with patients, to teach, to be at the cutting edge of technological advances, and to do research.