



The Eyes Rule in Lamensdorf's Laws

An interview with Eye Specialists' Dr. Michael Lamensdorf

by Linda Sechrist

As early as childhood Dr. Michael Lamensdorf could see his future in a grain of sand. It happened every December when his family vacationed on Lido Key. Now a renowned cataract and lens replacement surgeon, Lamensdorf quips, "Even as a young boy, I knew from my visits to Sarasota that I wanted to live here."

A Sarasota resident since 1984, Lamensdorf readily recalls the patience it took to walk his life's path and arrive at his chosen destination. Two of his greatest virtues, patience and self-discipline, were developed during the many years of acquiring the education necessary to practice his profession

at its highest level. Following high school at the prestigious Lawrenceville School, there were four years of study at Oberlin College in Ohio, four years at the George Washington University School of Medicine in Washington, D.C., a one-year internship at the Bowman Grey Medical Center at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina and a three-year residency at the University of Pennsylvania's Scheie Eye Institute topped off by a one-year fellowship at Emory University. The benefit of such an extensive education is two-fold. It enables Lamensdorf to offer his patients the best possible eye care and it affords them the peace of mind that can only come from having complete confidence in his surgical abilities, knowledge and skills that come into play when caring for their precious sense of sight.

While acquiring knowledge at Oberlin College, Lamensdorf encountered a botanist whose research and articles in Prevention Magazine piqued his interest in the medicinal uses of plants. A course in nutrition gave the two even more to talk about. "I enjoyed exchanging ideas with him," says Lamensdorf. Years later while attending an Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) meeting in Sarasota to hear lectures on the use of antioxidants and vitamin supplements in treating Macular Degeneration, Lamensdorf says, "The presentations conjured up memories of conversations with my friend. Though the lectures took place nearly 20 years ago, they were on the use of Vitamin A, C, E and Zinc in slowing the process." Today it is standard care to use such supplements, which have been improved upon and the government actually requires Lamensdorf to inform his patients about them. He also recommends bilberry, which in laboratory studies has been shown to slow eye disorders such as Glaucoma.

Sharing pertinent information about useful supplements and overall health comes easily to Lamensdorf whose blend of traditional and integrative medicine includes a friendly splash of humor, which he uses to describe his "Lamensdorf Laws". The profundity of one of the laws may tickle the

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funny bone but it applies to the eye. "As we age, everything we want to thicken, thins," he says, "and everything we want to thin, thickens. Everything else dries out." In everyday layman's terms this means that everyone needs to lubricate the eyes and for this Lamensdorf recommends his favorite artificial tears.

Integrative medicine to Lamensdorf also includes an occasional referral of a patient to an acupuncturist. A personal call after assessing the client's belief system, he advises, "Some people are better candidates for it than others."

Sometimes in his out-of-the-box approach to eye care, Lamensdorf suggests lifestyle changes that include eliminating or cutting back on the consumption of meat, something that he incorporates into his own lifestyle. Another suggestion that rolls off easily from his lips is to eat more organic foods. Over the years, this distinguished physician, who offers the latest technology and procedures to his patients, has even handed out maps to Jessica's Stand, with the recommendation to eat fresh local and when possible, organic foods that can help with a variety of health problems. He also strongly encourages people to stop smoking, which he says increases the likelihood of cataracts.

"I've not seen any scientific evidence about eating meat but I believe there are things in it and in processed foods that can slow the healing process," comments Lamensdorf.

When asked if cataracts are inevitable, he chuckles and responds, "I hope everyone lives long enough to get them." He reports that his oldest cataract patient was 106 when he performed surgery to remove them. While there is no one cause of cataracts, Lamensdorf advises that people who live in areas with consistent bright sunlight and those who spend a lot of time on or near the water are more likely candidates for them. Wearing prescription sunglasses is helpful as well as having a complete eye examination every two years. After age 60, once a year is recommended.

It doesn't require 20/20 vision to recognize Lamensdorf's enthusiasm and love of his work. "I love my work because I have the ability to make a difference in people's lives and that feels really rewarding to me," says Lamensdorf.

Eye Specialists is located at 1428 South Tamiami Trail in Sarasota. For more information or to make an appointment call 941-957-4987.



Dr. Michael Lamensdorf

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