

BRANDON G. BUSBEE, MD

WHEN WAS YOUR INTEREST IN THE RETINA SUBSPECIALTY FIRST PIQUED?

My interest and ultimate professional life as a retina subspecialist slowly evolved during my medical education. I entered medical school after having been exposed to the medical field by my father, who was a practicing orthopedic surgeon. I went into medical school with an open mind and looked at many specialties. Ultimately, I chose ophthalmology as my path because of the emphasis on helping patients improve their quality of life. By the time I was a resident at Wills Eye Hospital, I had been strongly influenced by Gary C. Brown, MD, MBA. He took an interest in my education and showed me how rewarding a career in retina could be. Dr. Brown's influence on my career path was instrumental in where I find myself today, Tennessee Retina.

WHAT ASPECT OF YOUR CAREER DO YOU FIND MOST FULFILLING?

I believe one of the most rewarding things about being a retina specialist is the ongoing relationships we enjoy with our patients. I entered retina before the anti-VEGF era. Once we had a successful treatment that needed to be given frequently, we started to see the same patients on a regular basis. What I love about helping these patients is that many have rich lives. Daily, I learn so many things about life by listening to my patients. If you have an extra minute in clinic, let the octogenarians tell you a story.

IF YOU COULD PASS ONE PIECE OF ADVICE ON TO YOUNG OPHTHALMOLOGISTS INTERESTED IN RETINA, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

I would advise young ophthalmologists to strike a balance in their lives early in their careers. Unlike the countless hours spent training to be an ophthalmologist, as a practicing physician, you will likely have time to explore other interests. I have found some of my pursuits outside of medicine to be energizing to all aspects of my career. If you have satisfaction outside of work, you will inevitably be a better doctor to your patients.

WHAT TACTICS DO YOU EMPLOY TO MAINTAIN A BALANCE BETWEEN WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE?

Traveling with my family has been a highlight of the professional success I enjoy. I try not to merge family travel with work travel. Meetings will help you professionally, but they do not give you enough time to really explore with your family. I have a 13-year-old son with whom I have backcountry-camped in New Zealand, explored the Galapagos Islands, and fished around Cape Horn. Those trips were some of my most cherished days as a parent and adult.



Brandon Busbee, MD, fishing with his son.

My late father told me, "There are always 100 reasons not to do something extraordinary with your family and only one reason to do it." I have never regretted the time I have taken to travel with my wife and son.

IF YOU COULD HAVE DINNER WITH ANY FICTIONAL CHARACTER, WHOM WOULD IT BE, AND WHY?

This is an easy one. I would have loved to have met and explored with Frank and Joe Hardy. I think I may have read every Hardy Boys book as a child. They were personified as normal kids (like me) who had incredible talent for solving mysteries. I envisioned myself as someone who could explore and solve dangerous situations just like them, given the chance. The Hardy Boys were great childhood entertainment before the digital age. ■

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- Financial disclosure: None acknowledged