

William Tasman, MD

Dr. Tasman, the Founder of Mid Atlantic Retina, practices at Wills Eye Institute, where he served as Ophthalmologist-in-Chief for 22 years. He is currently Professor and Emeritus Chairman of Ophthalmology at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia.



1. What inspired you to found Mid Atlantic Retina?

I started out as a solo practitioner, and as you get busier and busier, you need help. So I took a partner, who was Bill Benson, and then from there it just kind of mushroomed. Actually,

we started out as Retinovitreal Associates, and that became Mid Atlantic Retina a few years ago when we finally got a number of the practices together.

2. What has been the greatest achievement of your professional career?

It is tough to pull out a single achievement. I have had a special interest in pediatric retinal diseases, and I have followed some patients from the time they were premature infants until their 40s or 50s. To see that these people still have sight is pretty gratifying. Unfortunately, I cannot say they were all successes, but the ones who were certainly do make you feel good.

3. In the study of pediatric vitreoretinal disorders, which development do you believe has been the most beneficial and/or promising?

From my perspective, coming up with treatments

for retinopathy of prematurity has been the greatest achievement. When I first started in ophthalmology in the early 1960s, there weren't any good treatments for this disease, so most of those babies, if they had the changes that we now treat, went blind. In the 1980s, we finally showed that cryotherapy worked and began to save many of the eyes that previously would have been lost.

4. Having trained hundreds of residents and fellows, what is the greatest piece of advice you can offer to new ophthalmologists?

The first thing I tell them is to put your family first. Do your best to get home for dinner even though you are busy. Pay attention to what goes on at home because, in the long run, it is not going to be how many retinas you fixed, it is going to be how your family turns out.

5. What are some of your interests outside of ophthalmology?

I love history, and I am a total amateur at it. In particular, I like to look and see who in the past may have had eye injuries that have affected history and certainly the arts, so I delve into that. I like to ski (which I don't do often anymore), sail, and read. I still do the last two. ■