

Eye Associates of the South

offers competence
with a little Southern charm

By MIKE LACY



Photograph by Mike Lacy

Ophthalmologist Dr. Rainna Bahadur has been practicing at Eye Associates of the South for seven years. After two years, she became a partner with Dr. Joel Knight.

As quickly as she enters the room, ophthalmologist Dr. Rainna Bahadur connects. She engages. She charms. With many of her patients, chitchat about family comes before medical consultation.

"I've had patients to tell me, 'I couldn't wait for my visit to hear about the kids,'" she says with a smile. She describes her work as an ophthalmologist as "happy and very rewarding."

Her Indian heritage, combined with a light Southern accent, might throw one off balance. In fact, she likes the confused looks when she tells people she was born and raised in Greenwood, Miss.

But she has more than a warm smile and a friendly face. She has confidence honed by years of training, experience and achievement. She was a magna cum laude graduate of Millsaps College in Jackson and was the chief resident in the department of ophthalmology at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Then, she served a cornea fellowship at Dean McGee Eye Institute in Oklahoma City, Okla. As a result, she easily earns your trust.

All four of the physicians with Eye Associates — including Bahadur and her partner, Dr. Joel Knight — are board certified and fellowship trained. This is something that few medical practices can claim.

"We all have above and beyond the level of training needed," she says. "We take the job of

preserving and restoring our patients' vision seriously. I can't tell you how many times patients come to the office and say they are the most scared to lose their sense of sight."

Each of the four doctors in the practice has his own specialty. Bahadur specializes in cornea and external disease and refractive surgery, and her growing specialty is treating Dry Eye Syndrome. Knight practices general ophthalmology with an emphasis on cataract surgery and specializes in treating the retina. Dr. Sprague Eustis specializes in disease and surgery of the eye, pediatric ophthalmology and strabismus, commonly known as crossed eyes. Dr. Mark Brown specializes in oculoplas-

tics — plastic surgery for the eye.

The firm also has optometrists: Dr. Kimberly Benigno specializing in contact lens exams, including hard-to-fit cases such as keratoconus and astigmatism; and Dr. Joe Mitchell, who will do general eye exams and contact lens fittings.

Knight started Eye Associates about 20 years ago in Biloxi. Now, along with its main office at Cedar Lake Medical Plaza in Biloxi and one in Gulfport, it is opening a new clinic in Ocean Springs. It was because of Knight that Bahadur came to the practice about seven years ago. Two years into her practice, she became a partner.

"I remember hearing about Joel

when I was a resident — about what a gentleman he was and what a good doctor he was," she says. "The fact that he was retina and I was cornea made it a nice combination."

In fact, that's what Bahadur says makes Eye Associates a strong practice. "We can offer different things, yet share the same goals." But as much as anything else, she came to the Coast because she loves it.

"I did my fellowship away. I was born and raised in Mississippi, and I thought I wanted to get away, but I missed it," she says. She adds with another smile: "I missed going to Winn-Dixie and running into people I know."

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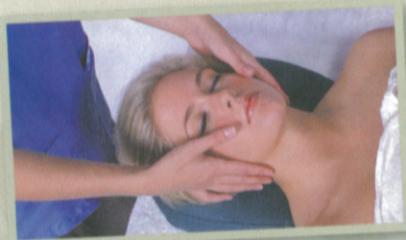
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