

MENU

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Mark S. Humayun, MD, PHD

Interviewed by Karen Roman, Editor-in-Chief, Retina Today

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BMC: WHO OR WHAT DREW YOU TO OPHTHALMOLOGY?

Mark S. Humayun, MD, PHD: I was initially interested in neuroscience and becoming a neurosurgeon, but during medical school my grandmother lost her sight as a complication of diabetes. I remember taking her to all the top retina facilities, but at that time we still hadn't figured out the role of laser in diabetes, and nobody really knew what to do. Her blindness redirected my focus to ophthalmology, retina in particular, and to developing therapies to prevent vision loss or to restore vision in those with sight-robbing ophthalmic conditions.

BMC: WHAT FUELED YOUR INTEREST IN INNOVATING AND INVENTING?

Humayun: I have always enjoyed coming up with new ideas and developing them into something bigger and better with the help of others. I knew I wanted to be engaged in doing something novel, something that hadn't yet been figured out. I like trying to address the unknown. I was interested in figuring out the puzzle of the brain and also the difficulties and challenges that we are facing with the eye. I remember saving money to get a telescope and staying up late, trying to see the moon and planets. It was something I loved thinking about. I liked quantum physics—for example, the whole aspect of gravitational fields on space and time.

I audited some quantum physics courses during my PhD in biomedical engineering because I liked it so much. The thing that was lacking in it was that it was very abstract; I wanted to be involved in a more applied field. And then of course, my grandmother's blindness really made me focus on trying to solve puzzles and things that can be translated and applied to patient care.

BMC: YOU HAVE A WIKIPEDIA PAGE. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT?

Humayun: I check it periodically to make sure it's factually correct. It's gratifying, to some extent, that somebody thought it was worthwhile to add a Wikipedia page about me. What helps is, when

WITHIN THIS ISSUE

Sondra Black, OD

Interviewed by Scott Krzywonos, Editor-in-Chief, CollaborativeEYE

Vance Thompson, MD, FACS

Interviewed by Scott Krzywonos, Editor-in-Chief, CollaborativeEYE

John P. Berdahl, MD

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