**Lauderdale Profiles**



**Matthew Harper, O.D. RHS ‘00**

Optometrist Harper Eye Center, PLLC

Bachelor of Science in Biology, Doctorate of Optometry

University of Tennessee at Martin, Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Salus University

**Q: How did you select your college major, certification program, or career path?**

**A:** When I got to college, I did not have a definitive plan. Optometry was on a list of potential careers I wanted to pursue. It took time, but I eventually narrowed it down.

**Q: What was the biggest influence in your selection of career path?**

**A:** Friends and family were very important in the decision-making process. I have a family member that is also an optometrist. It was easy to ask him questions about the profession.

**Q: If you could go back to**

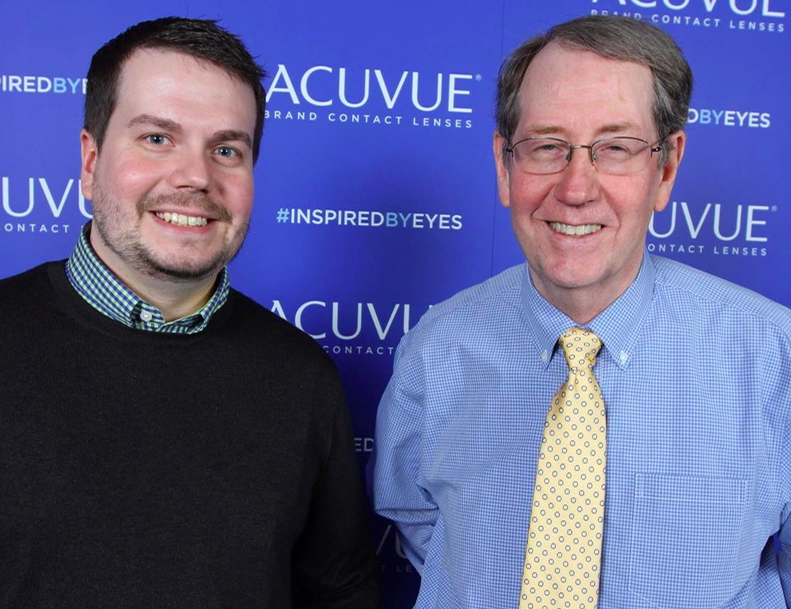
**high school and select any elective course to take that would have better prepared you for college/career, what would it be?**

**A:**  I would recommend taking courses in biology, chemistry, and physics. These classes are critical to performing well on the optometry admissio****n test.

**Q: What is your favorite aspect of your job?**

**A:** I really enjoy cataract and glaucoma management.

**Q: How do you/your company make a positive impact on society/our community?**

**A:** Our office tries to give back to the community by performing vision screenings a health fairs and community centers. We also donate glasses to other countries with the First United Methodist Church's Project 20/20 program.

**Q: What’s the most interesting thing you have been able to do in your professional career?**

**A:** I really enjoy when kids put on glasses for the first time. It's fun to watch their reactions.

**Q: What makes you get up each morning excited about your profession?**

**A:** Every day is different.

**Q: What advice would you share with K-12 students who are considering your profession?**

**A:** Take advantage of learning opportunities when you are younger because they pay off when you get older.

**Q: What were some of the jobs you held as a young person (summer jobs, part time work, etc.), before you were on your career path? Did they play any part in your future occupation?**

**A:** I worked part-time for Ripley Parks and Recreation during high school and college. Having a job early on definitely helped with my understanding of time management.