

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2012

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How Committed is
YOUR GIFT?

Edward Rashid, M.D.

20th Year as the Spurs' Eye Doctor



Edward Rashid, M.D.

A life in focus

by **ERNIE ALTGELT** Photography by **OSCAR WILLIAMS**

While many consider the remarkable visual restorative accomplishments of Edward R. Rashid, M.D., FACS, seemingly miraculous, upon examination it quickly becomes obvious the myriad successes this dedicated and highly trained surgical ophthalmologist regu-

larly achieves definitely aren't reliant solely on "a higher power" but are rather the natural result of a life committed to continual learning, hard work and the pioneering embrace of incredible, enabling technology.

Focused on providing excellence in his cho-

sen field for more than 36 years, this widely respected physician and scientist continues to establish a legacy of providing visual betterment to any and all who seek his considerable expertise. Sharing his knowledge, natural and acquired abilities, energies and, above all,

compassion has proved to be the winning formula that has propelled this unique San Antonio healer to the forefront of his profession.

Far-flung

Born into a military family in 1948 (while his father was stationed at Fort Benning, Ga.), a young Edward Rashid spent the majority of his early years on the move. As he readily admits, "I was an Army brat and grew up living across the United States and the world. The experiences I accrued were fantastic." Family deployments to Japan and Turkey as well as living in five different states comprised a portion of the cultural and geographical mix that ultimately helped shape his adult life. With such a varied background, his acquired ability to adapt and accept "new ways" contributed greatly to the doctor's future achievements as evidenced by his ready acceptance and utilization of the latest in ophthalmological technology.

Wherever Dr. Rashid (and family) went, however, another aspect played an equally important role. At the various schools he attended, participation in sports was paramount. So while he was always an excellent student, track, tennis and, above all, basketball also provided additional opportunities for the gifted athlete to excel and further instilled an attitude of wanting to "be the best." At his high school in Pittsburgh, Pa., as a senior, Dr. Rashid lettered in all three sports and was flattered to be offered prestigious basketball scholarships to several universities. (Because of his past performance on his school's basketball team, he was recently inducted into the high school's Sports

Hall of Fame.) In college, he continued to play basketball and rugby. Even today, competitive sports are still important within both his personal and professional lives.

Ultimately, it was his involvement in sports that introduced Dr. Rashid to the possibilities of a future career in medicine. During his high school senior year, a fractured leg suffered during a basketball game required him to spend many hours in the office of his orthopedic surgeon. As he remembers, "I was fascinated by the way the doctor treated his patients, his remarkable tools and equipment and, most tellingly, I realized what a noble profession medicine could be." This realization would follow Dr. Rashid throughout his academic career.

Higher learning

After high school, Dr. Rashid was honored to be selected for admission into the United States Air Force Academy. To be considered for enrollment (a very competitive process), individuals need a sponsor — in Dr. Rashid's case, it was the senior senator from Pennsylvania, the Honorable Hugh Scott — then a successful evaluation from a governmental committee that weighs each applicant's educational and personal qualifications. With Dr. Rashid's outstanding record in academia and sports, coupled with the fact that he received the highest score in the state of Pennsylvania on the Academy's entrance examination, acceptance was granted.

Oddly enough, Dr. Rashid's first inclination after admittance into the academy was to become a fighter pilot. When the young "doolie" (an academy term used for a freshman) realized

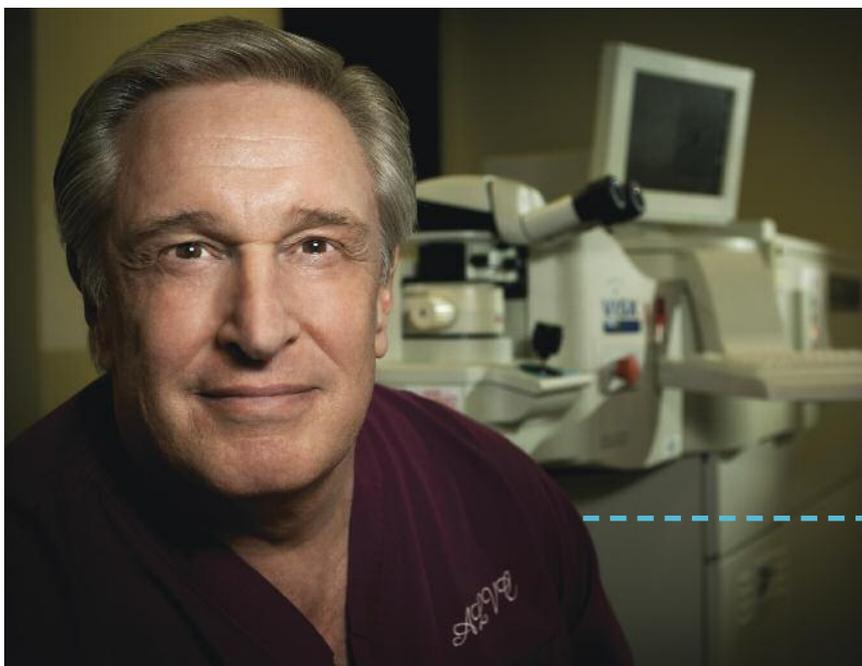
he also would have the opportunity to later attend medical school (compliments of the Air Force), he quickly reverted to his earlier, injury-inspired high school aspiration and, as he recalls, "jumped at the chance."

After graduation from the academy, the eager young student headed off to Northwestern Medical School in Chicago. It was during this time that ophthalmology as a specialty attracted the soon-to-be Air Force doc. During a summer rotation (as part of his overall curriculum) Dr. Rashid fortunately was assigned to a Navy ophthalmologist. Remembering that summer, he relates, "I became fascinated by the specialty. Not only did it involve correcting vision disorders in patients of all ages, but the one-on-one with those same individuals was very appealing too. And ophthalmology seemed to always be on the cutting edge of technology. I liked that!"

Ready to serve

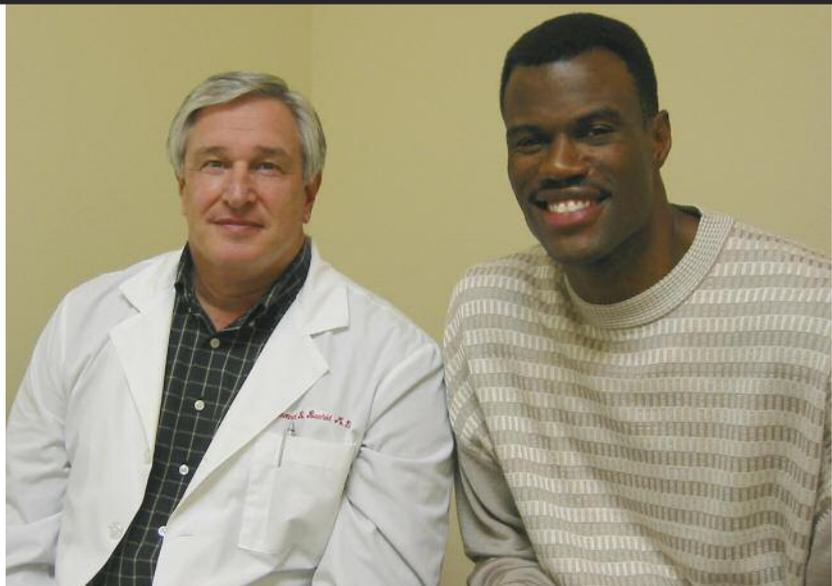
With diploma in hand (1976), the now Dr. (and Air Force Captain) Rashid was assigned to Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Miss., for an internship in internal medicine. This was followed (1978) by a three-year ophthalmology residency at San Antonio's Wilford Hall USAF Medical Center, located on the grounds of Lackland Air Force Base. It was at Wilford Hall (punctuated by several reassignments and advanced training opportunities) where the majority of Dr. Rashid's military medical career would be centered.

After certification by the American Board of Ophthalmology in 1981 while still assigned to Wilford Hall, Dr. Rashid was selected to pursue



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Courtesy of Dr. Rashid

advanced fellowship training at Emory University in Atlanta in two different specialties. He spent a year in intensive training in corneal and external diseases of the eye and later another specialized year of training in refractive surgery. Of equal importance, while at Emory the ever-inquisitive new doctor became very involved in the early research and development of refractive surgery. He was involved in the historic P.E.R.K study (Prospective Evaluation of Radial Keratotomy). He also tested the first lasers used for refractive surgery and was involved in some of the pioneering experimental procedures used to correct corneal refractive errors — technology and techniques he would continue to rely on and refine throughout his extraordinary career. Further kudos came when the doctor was reassigned for two years to Germany and was appointed the ophthalmology consultant to the European Surgeon General.

In additional recognition of his ever-expanding abilities, in 1987 Dr. Rashid was selected for a second fellowship in refractive surgery. For one year he traveled the country to study with four world-renowned refractive surgeons. As a result of that incredible 12-month period of growth and learning, coupled with his past accomplishments, he became a sought-after lecturer, receiving many invitations from his peers to speak, both nationally and internationally. Since that time, he has also authored multiple chapters in current textbooks and presented numerous scientific papers on aspects of refractive surgery.

During his long association with the Wilford Hall USAF Medical Center, Dr. Edward Rashid (now a full colonel) was designated chief of the refractive surgery section and the chief of cornea and external disease service. He also served as the residency training director of the

Air Force ophthalmology department and spent three years as the vice chairman of the department of ophthalmology. After honorably fulfilling his commitment to and retiring from the Air Force in 1990, he continues to serve as a civilian consultant to the Air Force Surgeon General for refractive surgery.

Citizen doctor

Today, Edward R. Rashid, M.D., FACS, maintains a flourishing private practice providing state-of-the-art treatments for a variety of eye and vision disorders. In partnership with two other gifted surgeons (his practice operates under the name Rashid, Rice & Flynn Eye Associates and maintains three locations), Dr. Rashid proudly explains, “As a group, we are able to provide comprehensive eye care, from routine exams to sight-saving surgeries.” And remarkably, this is what the tireless doctor seems to do week in and week out. As an expert on the LASIK, PRK, lens implant and advanced cataract procedures, he continues to perform hundreds of successful operations annually, almost magically — or so it seems to his grateful patients — restoring and improving vision, all facilitated by his vast knowledge, well-honed personal skills, reliance on a superb staff and insistence on using only the latest technology.

But beyond the many delicate surgeries and eye examinations administered, each workday usually includes multiple one-on-one pre-op consultations with patients, post-op patient follow-ups or a combination of the same. Dr. Rashid and his partners believe strongly in the importance of the doctor spending a generous amount of time with each individual patient before and after each procedure. With such a full professional life, it’s amazing that when he is not actu-

ally involved in the hands-on aspects of operating a demanding medical practice, he still finds the time to participate in numerous F.D.A. clinical studies and teach at the University of Texas, where he has been a full professor for more than 20 years. With a history of providing substantial charitable mission work while in the Air Force, it’s not surprising that as a civilian, the doctor still feels compelled to devote time to others. Currently he is serving on the ophthalmology staff of San Antonio’s Haven for Hope. Wow!

One for the team (go Spurs!)

Because of the high level of quality care and the superior results Dr. Rashid has been able to regularly achieve, his client list has grown to include many notable individuals whose professional reliance on good vision is an absolute essential. One very obvious example is the doctor’s 20-year relationship with the San Antonio Spurs. As he happily admits, “Being the team eye surgeon for the San Antonio Spurs has been wonderful for me since it combines my passion for basketball and my love of ophthalmology.” As a team physician, Dr. Rashid or an associate can be found on or near the team bench during each game (where he is readily available to handle any sports injuries involving the visual system); he also conducts annual examinations on the players’ eyes. He has done corrective surgeries on a number of the players as well. It is also his responsibility to care for the opposing teams when they are in the city and suffer injuries, either in practice or during actual games. A smiling Dr. Rashid adds, however, that you “please not blame the team’s eye doc when Manu or Timmy misses the odd lay-up.”

Visionary technology

In recent years, there have been remarkable advancements in vision corrective methodology that have revolutionized both laser vision correction (LASIK and PRK) and lens replacement that follows cataract operations. All of these procedures are being developed to more safely reduce the patient's dependence on glasses and contact lenses. Some of the new technology and methods Dr. Rashid employs include the following:

Excimer Lasers Until recently, the corneal tissue was primarily shaped based on the patient's eyeglass prescription, which did not address the optical aberrations unique to each patient's eye. Advanced testing devices can now accurately measure these fingerprint-like features of the eye, allowing enhanced Excimer laser remodeling of the cornea, not only to neutralize the patient's eyeglass prescription, but also to reduce other imperfections in the visual system.

IntraLase™ Technology The first step in the LASIK procedure is the creation of a flap, and for years this flap was created using a very sharp metal blade integrated into a device called microkeratome. Nine years ago a laser was developed called the IntraLase™, which creates the flap in about 10 to 20 seconds. This laser allows the surgeon to create more accurate and predictable flaps, leading to faster healing and recovery and greatly reduced complications. Dr. Rashid uses the latest version of this technology, the iFS IntraLase.

Advanced Lens Replacements Ophthalmologists have been replacing cataracts with synthetic intraocular implants for over 50 years. However, as Dr. Rashid says, "There have been tremendous advances in optical technology. In the past we were only able to treat our patients for distance vision, but now, with the new implant technology, we can help some patients see both near and far without as much dependence on glasses or contact lenses. We can also treat astigmatism with these specialized implants."

"Super" center

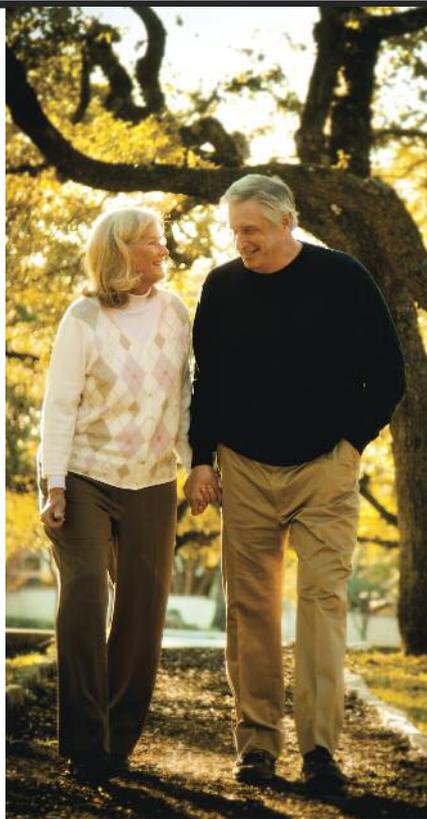
One of his most notable recent (and, for him, justifiably proud) achievements is his founding involvement in San Antonio's extremely well-regarded Alamo Laser Vision Center. This community-based vision correction facility was developed in early 1999 with Dr. Rashid serving as president and medical director. The state-of-the-art facility is one of the most technologically advanced laser centers in the country and offers only the most current technology (including CustomVue® VISX® laser, Allegretto Wave® laser, and the iFS IntraLase™ — one of the few in South Texas to have this new technology). Currently, there are 18 doctors who share and rely on this exceptional facility, which includes excellently equipped operating rooms manned by a highly qualified, experienced staff committed to ensuring consistent results and outcomes.

The other man

As with most highly accomplished individuals, Edward Rashid's life comprises much more than his professional persona indicates. For the past 39 years, he and his wife, Marilyn, have teamed in building a private life rich in achievement, exploration and excitement. Beyond raising two well-adjusted and productive sons — the eldest, Brian, is a successful sales and marketing director for a local company, while younger brother Eric, a practicing fitness instructor, has had past opportunities to "get physical" as an assistant strength coach for the Spurs and head strength coach for the Silver Stars — the Rashids spend their free time pursuing a host of traditional and nontraditional pastimes.

Snow skiing, water sports and international travel are enjoyed regularly, but for maximum thrills, standard and ultra-light piloting come into play. Marilyn was one of the first women in the United States to receive certification mastering a powered-parachute ultra-light aircraft. So, when asked which of the pair is more adventurous, Dr. Rashid is forced to admit, "I knew I was beat when Marilyn insisted we take skydiving lessons — on our second date!" Both are exceptional people in all aspects of their lives, and neither expects to slow down anytime soon.

Dr. Rashid's impact on and contributions to the ophthalmologic profession truly make for a story worthy of emulation. That one man can do so much for so many does seem as miraculous as the medical results he's able to achieve on a daily basis. If you have any doubts, just ask his patients. They'll simply tell you that, thanks to the doctor, "Seeing is believing!"



Courtesy of Dr. Rashid

Courtesy of Dr. Rashid

Opposite: Dr. Rashid, who has been a team physician for the San Antonio Spurs for 20 years, with David Robinson. Above from top: Dr. Rashid and his wife, Marilyn; cruising in a powered parachute; at the end of the flight.