



©Stockphoto.com/illustrious

NEW YORK—Women have undoubtedly made tremendous strides in many professional fields. At **Vision Monday**, we recognize the progress made by women in the optical field is nothing short of astounding even within the nearly 10 years since we've been producing this Special Report.

Nonetheless, each year we are still amazed by the number of women who are singled out for recognition by their peers, colleagues and staffs through the huge response we get from **VM** readers' nominations. Though the number

of women who have made an impact on the industry is undeniable, the 40 women selected for this year's Special Report are deserving of the spotlight for being truly exceptional.

In the 8th year of **VM**'s anxiously awaited Annual "Most Influential Women" report we once again segmented our nominees into four distinct categories that highlight the individual strengths of each of the women selected.

- **Executive Suite:** Candidates are women who hold positions such as president, VP, CEO, CFO, CMO, CIO or COO that guide their com-

panies forward, inspire leadership among their teams and peers and achieve high performance.

- **Mentors:** Candidates are women who are team builders, developers of talent, who via example or education and training successfully influence others to learn and to grow in their business or professional acumen.

- **Rising Stars:** Candidates are women who are "up-and-comers" in their careers and within their companies or arenas within the industry; sharp talents who are on their way toward higher levels of responsibility and influence.

- **Innovators:** Candidates are women who have initiated new product developments or special programs in the arena of marketing, technology or retail, who have spearheaded innovative business ideas or enterprises.

We hope you enjoy reading their profiles of accomplishment as **VM** shines the spotlight on women who make a difference in this ever-changing world of optical.

Please visit www.visionmonday.com to review an alphabetical listing of past years' honorees and to read prior years' Special Reports.

—The Editors

EXECUTIVE SUITE WOMEN WHO HOLD POSITIONS SUCH AS PRESIDENT, VP, CEO, CFO, CIO, OR COO

CONNIE ACHMAN

Connie Achman
Vice President, Sales & Marketing
 X-Cel Optical Company
 Sauk Rapids, Minn.

CHOSEN BECAUSE.....“Connie never stops inventing new strategies. Whether it’s something as simple as flowers in the reception area or as complicated as progressive lens technology, she leads and influences the staff at X-Cel in ways that are both equally important.”



Responsible for sales and marketing at X-Cel, Connie Achman works with her team to expand business opportunities through new products while respecting X-Cel’s long history of being a supplier of unique, small volume products.

Achman spent seven years in sales and marketing of intraocular lenses and then 14 years with Transitions Optical before moving to X-Cel.

“It’s very exciting being part of a small company where the decisions you make immediately impact the business,” said Achman. Her greatest work challenges are keeping up with the changes in the industry and how they affect the business. On the home front, Achman works to stay in touch with people who are important to her and...potty train her new dog!

SHE SAYS...“I’ve been blessed with strong mentors who continue to drive me to grow and step outside my comfort zone. There are so many

people who have influenced me in my career, often in ways I didn’t expect. Hopefully, they all know what they mean to me. I’m inspired by ‘what’s next’ and making a difference in some small way.”

NANCY BERNARD

National Sales Director
 ClearVision Optical
 Hauppauge, N.Y.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“Nancy is the ideal leader. A great business woman and a wonderful person, she oversees the company’s award-winning sales and customer service teams and has been called a true icon in the organization.”



Some 22 years ago, Nancy Bernard was about to take a job in another industry when she went in for her last interview with ClearVision’s David Friedfeld.

“When the interview ended I knew that optical would be a great fit and would provide me with an outstanding career opportunity,” said Bernard. She was brought in to assist David and Peter Friedfeld in sales and marketing and to help the ClearVision team grow a small, successful family-owned business into a national entity.

During her two decades with the company, ClearVision has grown from 15 sales consultants to 76, they have added five regional sales managers, as well as a business development manager. As director of sales and a member of ClearVision’s Executive Team, Bernard helps address day-to-day and future business objectives of the entire company.

In her role as director of sales, she focuses on increasing business, developing key account programs, hiring and expanding the company and working with the sales team.

SHE SAYS...“We have seen enormous advancements and changes in many areas. Information technology has brought the world to our finger-

tips. To succeed, we must recognize that change is inevitable and we must proactively look toward the future in order to prepare for what is to come.”

RHONA HUTTON

Vice President
 Colors in Optics, Ltd.
 New York, N.Y.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“Rhona Hutton has been vice president of Colors in Optics for over 25 years. She is called the ‘lifblood of the company’ thanks to her vision of what is fashionable and chic, as well as salable, in today’s diverse market.”



Crediting husband Sanford Hutton, president of Colors in Optics, as her mentor and the person who introduced her to the optical industry, Rhona Hutton has been in

the eyewear business for over 30 years. As vice president, Hutton heads up the design team for the company’s sun and optical divisions and works closely with licensors to interpret the personality and lifestyle of each individual brand.

Hutton’s role is not only to maintain style and quality, but to find the right partners and licensors to compliment and add to the company’s roster of brands. She also works closely with the marketing team to ensure that the proper strategies are in place for the marketing of the company’s retail brands from major ad campaigns to sales.

“It is important to be open and offer product that offers quality, value and style. I love my job because I love to be creative, have the ability to work with great people and make a difference in the fashion eyewear community,” Hutton said.

SHE SAYS...“I truly believe you have to be passionate. It is very important to be pas-

➡ MORE



EXECUTIVE SUITE

sionate, optimistic and confident about what you do. Because I am, I am happy to come to work and feel like I am contributing everyday.”

DIANE C. JOHN

Vice President of Business Development
Red Tray, HMI Buying Group
Vicksburg, Miss.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“She has effectively launched a whole new business in three short years. Her negotiations with key suppliers have led to partnerships with the leading optical labs.”



Diane John joined the Hayes Companies in 1991 and has never looked back. From directing the sales/marketing and product development for Hayes Marketing, Inc., to the planning, developing and implementing sales/marketing strategies for the HMI Buying Group, John continues to bring new ideas to the table. She recently launched a new business model for Red Tray Purchasing Alliance, and in three years, took this start-up business with no members to a multimillion dollar division with members in 43 states, all during one of the toughest economies in recent history.

She also launched two new online communities: Dr. Hayes Blog and Red Tray Radio podcasts. John loves the diversity of skills required to do her job including being both a strategist and an implementer of those strategies.

SHE SAYS...“Always play ‘up.’ Whether it’s taking your career to the next level or raising the level of your tennis game, be confident enough to seek out talented, successful people to work with, compete against, and learn from.”

CORINNE McCORMACK

Vice President and Fashion Director
FGX International
New York, N.Y.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“She is an active leader in the industry, through her involvement in the Optical Women’s Association (OWA) and the Vision Council, working to get more recognition for reading glasses and accessories, crafting a ‘fashion’ message for eyewear.”



With the acquisition of her company in 2009 by FGX International, one of the largest designers and manufacturers in non-prescription reading glasses and sunglasses, McCormack took on the new role of the vice president and fashion director. With her new title she became the first female VP at the company, bringing more than 30 years of combined experience in eyewear and retailing accessories to oversee the design and development of the Corinne McCormack line of readers, sunreaders and accessories and to analyze fashion trends and bring fashion advice and expertise to FGX International’s several existing brands (Foster Grant, Magnivision and others).

McCormack started her non-prescription reading glass business more than 15 years ago out of her apartment in New York City after several years working for other fashion companies. Today, the entrepreneur’s eyewear is available in more than 2,000 retail locations.

McCormack, also a **VM** Influential Woman in 2004, is a leader in the industry, actively involved or serving, on several boards, such as the OWA (past president and board member since 2009; chair of the nominating committee from 2007 to 2009, now chair of the program committee) and The Vision Council (chair of marketing communications committee for two

years, chair of fashion & lifestyle task force for four years). She worked closely with the Vision Council to get more recognition for reading glasses and accessories, and has helped the organization on crafting a “fashion” message for eyewear.

SHE SAYS...“No one can do it alone—the collaboration of a team creates success.”

MARY NYITRAY

Owner
Optical Arts
Toledo, Ohio

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“Mary has nurtured Optical Arts from a small, simple optical shop to a regional resource where unsurpassed eyecare and ultra-fashionable eyewear are the focus of the business.”



Mary Nyitray describes her career at Optical Arts simply by saying, “Because it is a small business, I wear all the hats.” The hat she’s put on most recently is designer and decorator for her Toledo-based optical boutique, the remodeling of which was completed in May and included having walls moved “to help with patient flow.”

Nyitray’s parents opened Optical Arts 48 years ago and she has been working here for the past three decades, taking over leadership from her father in 1988. “I was a receptionist and it gave me a really good foundation. I could step back and see how people responded to the opticians,” which she says helped her in dealing with customers.

From that time on, she’s been adamant about the fact that opticianry is well-suited for women. “I think the women have a real knack for frame selections, styling and adjustments. We also

➔ MORE

EXECUTIVE SUITE

have better communication ability, more compassion for customers,” she said.

Nyitray’s theory for success is to go beyond the basics of what a customer tells you and to focus on educating them. She believes that in talking to customers, you find out what they really need and how different products might help in different aspects of their lives.

SHE SAYS...“Finding out what people do and how they’re going to use their glasses is more than just order-taking. We should be delving in more and suggesting things for the patient to make their lives easier.”

MELISSA SCOPPETTONE**President**

Ron’s Optical
Livermore, Calif

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“She is always positive and willing to try something new.”



“I generally say I was born into the industry,” Melissa Scoppettone said. Her father, Ron Scoppettone, founded Ron’s Optical in 1974 out of his garage and,

as a child, Melissa was told that the company was her legacy. After a career in accounting, she became president five years ago and has since geared the company on a more fashion-oriented route, adding accessories like readers and chains in the process.

Currently, Scoppettone is working on creating a more stylish, modern answer to the question of men’s eyeglass cases, taking them away from the strictly utilitarian purpose they served years ago. “Having the woman’s touch on things definitely brings a new aspect of fashion to the company,” while adding that the case industry is still predominantly run by men. She is also interested in “getting practices to realize their potential

as a retail center.”

“Everyday I get to come to a place that has so much history for me and is very much a part of who I am. Running this business has been my dream since I was a young girl and seeing that dream become a reality has been amazing,” she admitted.

SHE SAYS...“I feel honored to be a part of a new generation that’s coming up in the optical world and creating a new aspect to the accessory and cases field. I feel really proud to have taken over this business that my father put so much into and gearing it more toward women and having that female touch that wasn’t here.”

BEVERLY SULITEANU**CMO, Creative Director & Vice President Product Development**

Wescan Optical
Montreal, Canada

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“Beverly has developed several product lines for Wescan all bearing her signature creative stamp which has helped generate incredible growth for the company in the last six years.”



Like many adults, Beverly Suliteanu credits her father as her biggest mentor. “He taught me that to evolve and grow as an individual I have to always believe in myself, not be afraid to take chances and that it’s okay to sometimes make mistakes,” said Suliteanu.

Her admiration takes on new facets when you learn that she grew up in the business and her father founded Canada’s Western Optical almost 50 years ago. She joined the company in sales but had her eyes on product development. Six years in sales and spending her Saturdays work-

ing in a dispensary and she realized her goal having acquired a true understanding of the needs of their customers.

“Experience in sales is invaluable. It allows you to truly understand what is important to your customers,” stated Suliteanu. To this day, she still maintains a small group of clients in order to keep her eyes and ears on the market, in addition to her primary responsibilities for the development and design of six collections, three of which are sold internationally, and the management of the portfolio of brands the company distributes in Canada.

SHE SAYS...“It is important for women to trust their talent and not be afraid to speak their mind. Women are strong, forward-thinking and caring. Combine this with a practical approach to fashion and business and it’s easy for women to make a difference in this industry.”

JENNIFER TAYLOR**Executive Vice President and CFO**

Eye Care Centers of America
San Antonio, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“Her dedication and passion for the business has led to her success at ECCA...her hands-on, ‘Texas’ style continues to inspire all stakeholders to be the best they can be.”



After three years at accounting giant Price Waterhouse, Jennifer Taylor joined the Eye Care Centers of America (ECCA) optical chain 13 years ago as vice president and controller; she was promoted to her current position as executive VP and chief financial officer late in 2008.

In her role as executive VP/CFO, the

[➤ MORE](#)

EXECUTIVE SUITE

Houston native is responsible for overseeing the financial and accounting activities of the retail arm of HVHC, which includes more than 525 stores under a variety of brands. Taylor helped with the financial transition after HVHC acquired ECCA in August 2006, and that experience has helped her professional development, she said, noting, "I've found it's important to embrace change, which is not always a strength of financial people. Change can be scary, but then you move on to build a stronger organization."

SHE SAYS... "Women in the optical business have definitely made progress since I started with ECCA in 1997. Everyone has come to view women and men more equally, recognizing their individual strengths and weaknesses."

JENNY L. WEBB**Co-Owner**

Downtown EyeCare
Marquette, Mich.

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Jenny's personality is a model for her staff when it comes to customer service, and professional dispensing and she leads by example in the marketing abilities. She is active in community involvements and a role model for all of us."



Jenny L. Webb came out of early retirement in 2005 to move 450 miles away from her home outside of Detroit to Marquette, Mich. There, she opened Downtown EyeCare with her husband Jon Webb, OD, whom she calls her "partner in crime."

In the five years since moving to Marquette, Webb and her husband have also started a vision program for the uninsured in the area. With the help of the Medical Care Access Coalition (MCAC), Downtown EyeCare gives

patients free eye exams and then provides them with frames from Cherry Optical lab at a minimal cost.

Webb credits her parents for "teaching me how to treat people," and also mentions her co-workers at both labs as mentors. "We would not have built either practice if it were not for their support...they are dear people in my life," she said.

As for staying interested in the field after all these years? "It's really easy to stay passionate because everything is always changing. It's a cool balance of medical and fashion and it always has something that keeps me intrigued," Webb said.

SHE SAYS... "Back before women were more involved in day-to-day operations, glasses were definitely a medical device. But you're doing much more. And patients will come back because they know they look good. Women are the ones fitting the personalities and not just the person."

DIANE G. WILSON, OD**President**

Arnold EyeCare Center
Arnold, Mo.

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Dr. Wilson leads by example. She has standards for performance and a desire to serve others that I have never witnessed before...Always positive and encouraging, she is a terrific person. I am honored to work for her."



Diane Wilson, OD, vividly remembers coming to Arnold EyeCare as a child, especially for her father, who suffered ongoing eye problems as a result of an eye injury in the '70s. "I saw the impact that it had on my family. I had exposure to the field and how it affects

people's lives," she said.

Today, Wilson is the president of Arnold Eye Care, where she has worked for the past 22 years. She mentions co-workers Mary Beth Scaglione and Leah Vail as mentors, speaking highly of both women's proclivity to build relationships with their customers.

Wilson has been very involved in her field, serving as a member of the Pennsylvania and DelVal chapters of VOSH (Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity), the AOA and Missouri Optometric Association. She is also an active member of her church and the Arnold Rotary Club—from which she won the Paul Harris Award—as well as a Vision See and Vision USA provider.

Wilson also organizes yearly mission trips to Haiti and Guatemala. "I like the fact that I have a skill that I can take to underdeveloped countries and I have something to offer to them. The skill of optometry is easily transferable to other parts of the world. We can provide something very immediate—glasses, diagnosis, arranging treatments."

SHE SAYS... "Focus your time and energy on what's really important to you and always try to maintain a balance. And bring a grateful heart to the service."



RISING STARS WOMEN WHO ARE 'UP-AND-COMERS' IN THEIR CAREERS AND COMPANIES

FAREHA ANWAR

General Manager
Eye-Q Optometry
Lincoln, Calif.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“As a senior entrepreneurial executive with more than 8 years of experience in managing sales, operations, personnel and merchandising, Fareha is influential because of her character traits which bring true leadership...She just doesn't work 8 to 5, she breathes it.”



Fareha Anwar began honing her managerial skills at a young age while working as a teenager in her mother's beauty salon. After obtaining a

bachelor of arts degree in sociology from the University of Oklahoma, she directed a staff of 25 sales associates and held full P&L responsibility for several LensCrafters stores in California. Today, as the general manager of Eye-Q Optometry in the Sacramento suburb of Lincoln, Calif., Anwar has developed into a strong leader with a motivational management style and reputation for building and retaining a first class sales team. She oversees the daily office operations of the 10-person practice and is charged with all administrative aspects including budgeting, purchasing, billing, human resources policies, procedures and payroll. She is also responsible for timely execution of financial reporting, including operating forecasts, cash flow planning, as well as sales and marketing direction of the practice. Her business philosophy focuses on educating the patient about the importance of vision care and marketing the “personal touch” aspects of the optometric practice where patients' business is appreciated and repeat customers are a mainstay.

SHE SAYS...“I project self-expectations. I expect high levels of performance from myself and those around me. I aim to bring the best out of everyone and expect each person on the team to contribute per their responsibilities to make for a successful business effort.”

LOPA DESAI

Director of Marketing
Kenmark Group
Louisville, Ky.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“Her leadership skills and knowledge have been instrumental in building an in-house marketing team with a clear focus on growing Kenmark's business and making them a leader in the industry.”



Her first job in optical, Lopa Desai joined Kenmark in 2008 and in the two years since has clearly made an impact on her colleagues and vice versa. “I love my job because of the people I work with, from my colleagues and leadership to our customers,” shared Desai. “There is so much passion for what we do, it is infectious.”

In her present role as director of marketing, she is accountable for the company's marketing strategy and those of their brand portfolio. She also works on new business development, brand management, advertising, public relations and creative, as well as trade show management. “I really see my job as one of facilitator,” she explained. “Someone who is able to recognize where there is opportunity and clear the path for my team to succeed.”

Desai knows there is much more to learn, but feels like she stepped into the career she had always been searching for. One, however, that is not without its challenges: “We as an industry are seeing a lot of change, both in its shape and the ever evolving needs of our customers. There is so much more information available, the challenge is fighting through the clutter and connecting with our customers in a meaningful way,” she said.

SHE SAYS...“I have never been in an industry that's so supportive of women. I wish more [women] were aware of the opportunities in optical. The career they want is theirs to take... just go out there and grab it!”

AMANDA DITCH

Operations Manager
Clarkson Eyecare
Ellisville, Mo.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“She gives great input on everyday operations of the company and is a true leader and mentor to the staff. She keeps her offices running smoothly and efficiently and is always there to help out.”



Amanda Ditch is currently the operations manager for Clarkson Eyecare, a company she's been with for 14 years. It's her early start in the business that helps Ditch perform her long list of daily tasks. Her uncle and aunt, Dr.'s Lawrence Jehling and Lynette Lui, founded the company and Ditch started working there in college as an optician while studying for a biology degree. She then became an office manager and later, a Lasik administrator. She was promoted to her current position five years ago and today, oversees 14 primary eyecare offices as well as two Lasik centers.

She credits planning and modern technology with helping her keep track of a very hectic schedule. “You have to stay on top of everything in order to be able to answer questions at a moment's notice. I plan my week the Sunday before even though I know that it's going to change.”

When it comes to her inspiration, she names Clarkson's Gerald and Bill Jehling as her main sources, along with her office managers whom she credits with keeping her positive.

SHE SAYS...“As with any business, customer service should be first and foremost. Remember that you need patients, and without them

➡ MORE

RISING STARS

you don't have a business. Patients don't need us, we need them. If we don't take care of our patients, we don't have a business."

JENNIFER PEIFFER

Marketing Manager
i-dealoptics
Ferndale, Minn.

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "According to her nominator, Jennifer's creativity and devotion to her customers has been an integral part of i-dealoptics growth and success."



Jennifer is responsible for the creation of all advertisements to the trade, the creation of marketing pieces, catalogs, developing the company's website and maintaining relations with a large customer base, as well as giving her two cents on product development. "I never get bored," said Peiffer. "There is always something new to stretch myself."

Peiffer started in the optical industry in college when she took a job at a large retail chain on the advice of a friend and upon graduation became an optician and frame buyer in a private practice. But eventually she felt she had achieved all she could there. Having already developed a relationship with management at i-dealoptics through her frame buying role, a job offer from the company offered her a chance to do something new and different.

"I started at the bottom and knew nothing about this side of the business," she added. "But the more I grabbed responsibility, the more they let me and it snowballed and it's been great." Peiffer feels she has been able to do so because the optical industry fits so many different lifestyles and personalities and offers so many avenues for different types of people to lend their strengths.

SHE SAYS... "My goal is to always do better

than I did before, be it a tangible thing or an intangible thing. I am always learning, growing and improving."

AMY SCHNEIDER

Director of Style and Co-Founder
Eyes of Faith Optical, LLC
West Middlesex, Pa.

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Amy used her experience as an optician to build a new company from the ground up. She is an inspiration for others to step out of their comfort zones and accomplish something truly amazing."



As one of the founders of Eyes of Faith Optical, Amy Schneider, along with her husband Jim, has done something the optical industry has never seen before. Two years ago, they began Eyes of Faith, a purpose driven eyewear company that gives 10 percent of its gross sales to Christian children's charities through their non-profit Eyes of Faith Foundation.

A dispensing optician for 15 years before starting Eyes of Faith, Schneider is responsible for the company's product and brand development (their first eyewear collection recently hit stores), finishing their first sunwear collection and she is currently designing the company's first licensed brand, a Veggie Tales eyewear collection for children.

She also handles all of the company's merchandising and promotions, as well as any of the additional little tasks that arise with a start-up company. But she never loses sight of the company's primary purpose. "There is an enormous amount of need across the globe. Eyewear has provided us a vehicle to give back and I get to make a difference in people's lives everyday," Schneider said.

SHE SAYS... "You can't be afraid to take risks. The biggest risk was us not taking the risk. This is an amazing industry and no matter where

your talents lie there is a place for you and something for everyone."

ANN SHANLEY

Vice President, Marketing & Services
Polycore USA
Reno, Nev.

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "She has developed great relationships with Polycore's business partners and has spearheaded a complete re-branding and positioning of the company. Her influence is very deep both inside and outside of the organization."



During her college years, Shanley held a clerical job at a Bakersfield, Calif. eyecare center. This experience helped her land a job as a receptionist and customer service rep for the U.S. division of Polycore, the Singapore-based lens manufacturer. After graduating college, she remained with the company, which promoted her to supervisory positions in sales, marketing, customer service and inventory management and distribution.

Deciding to concentrate on marketing, Shanley took charge of Polycore USA's customer communications. She implemented a customer-centric approach that helped to distinguish the company's marketing materials and programs from its competitors. "We learn about our customers' business and beyond," said Shanley. "If that means customizing a solution for them, we do it."

She credits the late Calvin Howell with teaching her about the optical business and about how to manage people. Lloyd Yazbek of Central Optical is also someone who inspires her. "He said if you make business simple and pay attention to what matters most you'll succeed," she noted.

She credits the late Calvin Howell with teaching her about the optical business and about how to manage people. Lloyd Yazbek of Central Optical is also someone who inspires her. "He said if you make business simple and pay attention to what matters most you'll succeed," she noted.

SHE SAYS... "Never pass by an opportunity to learn something, whether you think it's part of your job or not."

MENTORS WOMEN WHO ARE TEAM BUILDERS AND DEVELOPERS OF TALENT

CAROL ALEXANDER, OD

Director, Professional Affairs
Vistakon
Fullerton, Calif.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“She helps educate fellow optometrists about all aspects of soft contact-lens practice and marketing. Carol is a credit to her profession and her company.”



After 20 years running her own optometric practice in Sylvania, Ohio—including a stint as the first female president of that state’s optometric association—Carol Alexander, OD, joined Johnson & Johnson Vision Care’s Vistakon operation three years ago. Currently, she works between Fullerton, Calif., where her husband, Kevin Alexander, OD, is president of the Southern California College of Optometry, and Vistakon’s headquarters in Jacksonville, Fla.

Her job responsibilities include training a cadre of 19 eyecare professionals who do speaking engagements on contact lenses for Vistakon, as well as working with the company’s sales and marketing teams to help them understand practitioners’ needs.

After starting her eyecare career as a paraoptometric, Carol Alexander graduated from Ohio State University’s College of Optometry in 1987, one of 13 women in a graduating class of ’62. Though she faced some discrimination back then—finding it more difficult as a woman to secure financing to open her optometric practice, for example—Alexander feels her profession is much more open to advancement by women today.

SHE SAYS...“Women are a part of everything in the eyecare field these days; today’s optometry stu-

dent can be anything and do anything in the profession.”

JILL COX

**Director of Network Resources,
VSR Coordinator**
Vision Source
Oklahoma City, Okla.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“She created the idea of involving staff to become trained in new programs and procedures to become better leaders.”



With an interest in creativity, Cox earned her BA in interior design from the University of Oklahoma but started her career in an ophthalmology practice, earning her COA and CMT, becoming a scrub tech, assisting in surgeries. An opportunity came along with a new refractive surgery group where she got involved in the expansion of those centers. Her experience with general practice issues taught her the value of involving the staff, which she was able to develop once she joined Vision Source in 2001.

Cox created the idea of selecting a staff representative from Vision Source offices and forming local study groups to share practical ideas and develop training that could pool experiences for the advantage of all. Cox said, “Networking at this level has raised the overall understanding of how to manage and support the business side of an optometric practice.”

There are now some 82 groups across the country with two regional representatives and 82 lead facilitators. The rich resources and training materials and processes that Cox and her team have developed, focus on all business elements of the practice and led to the initiation of the Vision Source Business Associate (VSBA) program in April 2005.

She noted, “When I started working, the power was at the top, as in any corporation. But there’s been a generational shift, people are used to working in teams to come up with solu-

tions, there’s a lot of collaboration.” Cox credits Vision Source’s Glenn Ellisor, OD and Bobby Christensen, OD with “setting me loose” and “always thinking outside the box.”

SHE SAYS...“It’s amazing how one step will lead to another and before you know it, there is a whole journey to talk about.”

REBECCA JOHNSON

Director of Education
Eyefinity/OfficeMate
Fletcher, N.C.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“She is an amazing instructor to so many, and always has a positive attitude.”



Johnson started at the front desk of an ophthalmology practice, 27 years ago, a young mom without a college degree, but two young kids to support. She started to learn everything she could, eventually developing a formal training program for the large staff, creating manuals, books and study guides. She went to college when her daughter did, starting with one business course part time and achieving a full scholarship as well as gaining certification as a paraoptometric and as a certified ophthalmic executive.

After working in the systems arena, she started her own firm, the Foundation for Ophthalmic Training & Development, where she began to consult for several ophthalmic and optometric practices throughout Florida. She was persuaded by OfficeMate president Ed Buffington to join the company three years ago. Today, she directs 19 training specialists and implementation trainers who work on-site as well as teach online through OfficeMate University—teaching some 140 classes a week via WebX.

Last year, she initiated a virtual users’ group meeting, subsequently recording classes and distributing links afterwards to reach some 3,000 practices. Her focus this year is to get some 7,000

➤ MORE

MENTORS

O/M clients ready to move on to version 9.0 “The work we’re doing is pouring the concrete and building the foundation, so everything a practice puts on top of it is stable. We’re motivating people to move forward in their practices.”

SHE SAYS...“Take advantage of every opportunity to learn. And thank the people who give you that chance.”

NEERA KAPOOR, OD, MS, FAAO, FCOVD-A.

**Associate Clinical Professor,
Chief of Vision Rehabilitation Services**
State University of New York,
State College of Optometry
New York

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“As chief of the Visual Rehab Department, Dr. Kapoor trains residents, sees patients and oversees all administrative functions of this large service. Her sheer passion for her specialty influences young optometry students to pursue this worthwhile area. And her patients love her.”



Over the past 14 years of working with individuals with acquired brain injury (ABI), Neera Kapoor, OD, has co-authored 22 peer-reviewed articles, 8 textbook chapters and 19 poster presentations, as well as having lectured locally and regionally, regarding vision and ABI.

Having completed a Masters of Science in

Vision Science, Doctorate of Optometry and a residency in Vision Therapy and Rehabilitation, all from SUNY-Optometry, Kapoor has been a full-time clinical faculty member there for 14 years.

“My philosophy regarding optometry is to treat the patient as a whole person, and not just a pair of eyeballs,” she said. Through vision therapy, Kapoor believes, “We are in the position of helping patients to help themselves,” and mentions that she finds that aspect most rewarding.

She is also involved in professional organizations like the New York State Optometric Association. “When you’re more involved at that political level, you have a stronger voice,” she said, encouraging other female optometrists to take part in political organizations in their field.

On a personal front, Kapoor says that her

[➤ MORE](#)



Congratulations
Stephanie Turk

Director of Business Development
and Marketing, Altair

Honored as one of Vision Monday's
Most Influential Women in the Optical Industry.

We thank you for your Vision and Leadership.



MENTORS

mentors are her parents, Ajit and Prem Kapoor. "If you listen to the ideas from those you love and who know you, you can really reach the maximum potential."

SHE SAYS... "I would like to think that the passion I have for optometry comes through in all that I do and is how I make a difference professionally."

HARUE JEAN MARSDEN, OD**Chief of the Stein Family Cornea and Contact Lens Service**

Southern California College of Optometry
Fullerton, Calif.

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Dr. Marsden is a tireless worker, teacher, private practice professional, president of the California Optometric Association, volunteer and COPE-approved speaker."



Although Harue Jean Marsden, OD graduated optometry school 23 years ago, in some ways she feels as if she never left school. As a teacher at the Southern California College of

Optometry for the past 21 years, her academic vantage point and participation in organizations such as the American Academy of Optometry is her way "of paying it forward. Nothing is more rewarding than to see my previous students as leaders of their organizations," she said.

Marsden is currently chief of the Stein Family Cornea and Contact Lens Service at the Eye Care Center at SCCO and will be assuming the role of Assistant Dean of Clinical Education where she'll direct outreach missions for students at military installations in far-flung places such as Japan and Guam. Throughout her two plus decades at the college, her greatest challenge has been "keeping ahead of the ever changing game of health care. It's easy to maintain the status quo but in the last 20+ years that I've been in practice if I continued to do what I did then, the world would have long passed me by."

SHE SAYS... "With more female professionals entering the optical industry we are seeing phenomenal leaders in industry, research, academia and business. The lines of gender no longer act as a barrier to what we can achieve but now serve as a path to expansion and improvement."

CAROL MASON**Vice President, Client Administration**

Davis Vision
Latham, N.Y.

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "She's exhibited the confidence to face the toughest challenges and demonstrated strong, dynamic leadership."



With a degree in engineering from Penn State and a masters degree in computer science from Union College, Mason started on a technical path, first working for Getty Oil in Houston as an engineer, then joining General Electric, where she held a variety of roles, acquiring her Six Sigma Black Belt certification. Approximately half-way through her career, Carol was asked to assume management responsibilities for technical and operational units.

She joined Davis Vision five years ago to learn a new industry and "to be part of an organization with phenomenal growth capabilities and a national presence." She started in 2006 as the director of project management where she led the company's Sarbanes Oxley initiative. She was subsequently promoted to senior director in 2007, assistant vice president in 2008 and most recently was named vice president of client administration in 2009.

Mason presently leads five departments and a staff of 50 associates at Davis Vision (Billing, Claims, Electronic Enrollment, EDI and Client Reporting). Her focus is on operational excellence, ensuring regulatory requirements are met, introducing new technology/systems, and delivering business efficiencies for Davis Vision clients.

She said, "Davis' senior management team took

me under their wing and taught me the industry; My background enables me to get into the details but as I've acquired additional responsibilities I've learned to grow my team and delegate."

SHE SAYS... "Don't be afraid to take on tougher assignments, view every challenge as an opportunity to grow."

LAURIE PIERCE, LDO, ABOM**Instructor, Opticianry**

Hillsborough Community College
Tampa, Fla.

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Her energy and enthusiasm for improvement of the profession seems endless. She consistently earns the highest ratings from her college students for her enthusiasm, encouragement and knowledge of the profession."



For an optician who has been so involved in furthering the profession, Laurie Pierce is certainly quick to praise others. "My mentors are my optical mom, Wolfgang Liese from

Classic Eyewear in Portland, Maine, and industry leaders like Raanan Naftalovich and Hilaire Van der Veen from Shamir, Carole Bratteig from Transitions Optical, Rene Soltis, Danne Ventura and other leaders who have helped to raise the bar in optical excellence," she said.

Pierce started her optical career while still in high school at the Kennebunk Optical Center her mother owned in Maine. From there she went on to Newbury College's opticianry program in Boston, during which time she worked at a mom-and-pop optical business, later managing Lugene Opticians, and upscale optical boutique in Boston's Copley Place.

Today, she is a full-time instructor of opticianry at Hillsborough Community College in Tampa, Fla. and consultant for Shamir and Transitions. She is also a member of Profession-

MORE

MENTORS

al Opticians of Florida, Opticians Association of America, National Academy of Opticianry and National Federation of Opticianry Schools and has received several awards including The Earl Cooper Award and the Dennis Tilley Educator of the Year Award.

SHE SAYS...“We all want to leave a little something behind and I feel like I have a fantastic opportunity to make a difference in my little corner of the world and elevate the field of opticianry with great new members.”

TAMMY REAVES

Vice President of Operations, Pearle Vision Franchise and Corporate Stores
Luxottica Retail
Lake Mary, Fla.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“People want to work for Tammy because she develops and grows her team...she is a role model as she leads the field management team.”



Responsible for approximately 800 Pearle Vision optical stores located in the U.S., Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, Tammy Reaves spends a lot of her time on the road.

Her current position as vice president-operations for Luxottica Retail’s Pearle Vision franchise and corporate stores—which she has held for about a year and a half—includes responsibilities to drive the overall sales strategy for Luxottica’s Pearle Vision locations, while overseeing the ongoing growth of the Pearle retail brand.

Having begun her career in the retail business outside of optical, Reaves joined Luxottica Retail in 1996; since then, she has worked as a regional vice president for Pearle as well as in regional management positions with sister retail brands LensCrafters and Sunglass Hut.

Among Reaves’ responsibilities these days is helping to organize the first Pearle Vision brand summit scheduled for this October, which will bring Pearle Vision optometrists and personnel from both the corporate and franchisee sides together in New Orleans, replacing the former annual Pearle franchisees’ convention.

SHE SAYS...“In business today in general, and particularly in the optical retail business, opportunities are incredible for women if they’re driven, committed and have the tenacity to follow through on their leadership beliefs.”

Carl Zeiss Vision Congratulates Bernadette Hiskey

One of the Vision Monday most influential women in optical

Bernadette Hiskey has long been a force behind the innovations that have shaped Carl Zeiss Vision. Today, she is a leader in the customized lens revolution that is revitalizing

our industry. Thank you, Bernadette for your creativity, your dedication and your inspiration. We applaud your selection by Vision Monday as one of the most influential women in optical.



Bernadette Hiskey
Director, Product Marketing

Your influence benefits us every day.

Carl Zeiss Vision
USA 1-800-358-8258
www.vision.zeiss.com





DIANE STRICKLER

President/Owner

POL Labs
Roanoke, Va.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“She took a lab that her father left her and created her own identity that anyone who meets her can respect.”



Originally a high school art teacher, Strickler entered the family business, Professional Ophthalmic Laboratories (POL), in 1977. Working alongside her brother, she learned all aspects of making prescription lenses before buying him out in 1992.

“I learned by making mistakes,” she recalled. “I like to tell my staff, ‘Don’t be afraid to admit you’re doing something wrong,’ because I’ve probably made the same mistake.”

One of only a handful of women who owns a wholesale lab, she currently manages a staff of 35 employees that services accounts throughout Virginia and the surrounding states.

Breaking into the male-dominated lab business has been tough, Strickler admits. Yet she credits two men who mentored her: Hal Rothstein, owner of Hirsch Optical and the late Phil Whitaker, a Silor Optical sales rep. “Hal shared his core values with me and told me that I could make it if I poured my sweat and blood into the business, like he did. Phil was one of the best reps in the industry. He was also an advisor and friend. He gave me the shot in the arm I needed to succeed.” Strickler also said that joining Global Optics, the lab buying group, is “one of the best decisions I’ve made. They’ve become a total business partner.”

SHE SAYS...“I see women becoming very powerful in our industry. Compared to 25 years ago, there’s been an equalization between men and women, and with that has come mutual respect and friendship.”

STEPHANIE TURK

Director of Marketing

Altair
Rancho Cordova, Calif.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“Innovation, growth, passion, and transparency are the values she has built her career upon, while instilling the importance of excellent customer service in her sales team.”



Stephanie loves to focus her energy on training and helping the sales team and accounts grow their business. She enjoys teaching the team

how to open a conversation and create interest in a product. Since Altair sells primarily over the phone—a very difficult sell—it’s thanks in large part to Stephanie’s trainings that the company has mastered this technique.

A 25-year veteran of the optical industry, Turk currently divides her time between Altair, VSP Global, and Marchon. She oversees Altair’s marketing efforts and works on companywide initiatives that support their doctor community.

“We’ve pushed the envelope on brand e-learning to help our customers achieve greater levels of success. We recently deployed the Marchon University, an online training resource for Altair and Marchon sales representatives,” explained Turk. By asking “what if” questions such as, “What if we could better use technology to provide service and support to our customers?” Turk has found that by stretching yourself, your team, and your company, you can get results that are extremely rewarding.

SHE SAYS...“I’ve been mentored in one way or another by just about everyone I’ve ever worked with. I try to look for at least one quality in every person that I interact with that I can learn from and incorporate into what I do. I’m inspired by

constantly learning, trying new things and bringing out the best in others.”

IVY ZITO

Chief Financial Officer

Encore Optics
South Windsor, Conn.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“Ivy is my go-to person when I need greater understanding about financial situations. I trust her knowledge and have the greatest confidence in her abilities. Ivy has a great ability to not only mentor her knowledge with women but I have seen her mentor businessmen as well.”



Ivy Zito was in public accounting as a CPA for 18 years before becoming involved in her husband’s optical businesses. As Zito describes it, she became interested in the optical industry by osmosis. Her husband, Paul Zito, started QSA Optical in 1979, the year Paul and Ivy were married. Even though she didn’t work with her husband at QSA until 1996, she helped set up the initial financial and accounting systems for QSA. As time went on, she couldn’t help but get more and more interested in the industry. “And the rest is history, as they say!” said Zito.

Today, as the chief financial officer for Encore Optics, Zito manages all administrative areas including accounting and financial operations, banking, legal, outside CPA and insurance relationships, HR, personnel, employee benefits and payroll.

SHE SAYS...“My first mentor was my father, in whose footsteps I followed by becoming a CPA. My father taught me to ‘give back’ to your chosen profession, and that’s what motivates me—watching those I’ve worked with and mentored grow in their own careers so that they can pass along their wisdom to someone else.”

INNOVATORS

WOMEN WHO HAVE INITIATED NEW PRODUCTS, PROGRAMS OR IDEAS MARKING SUCCESS

MAUREEN BEDDIS

Senior Director of Marketing and Communications

The Vision Council
Fairfax, Va.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“It is her vision that led to the creation of the Eye Health Summit, an event designed to bring together key representatives of the vision community in order to build consensus for an eye health message to the public.”



A journalism major at Temple University, Beddis did an internship in public relations and was drawn to the field, starting out as an account manager at a public relations agency and then “discovering” the vision and optical business when she became advertising and PR manager for Carl Zeiss Vision, where she recalls, she was struck by how little most people knew about the importance of eye examinations.

When her former Zeiss boss, Ed Greene, moved to The Vision Council as CEO, he asked Beddis to join him there. She started at the association in 2006 and was director of integrated marketing, focusing on the rebranding and vision initiatives of the group, communicating its benefits to members within the industry. Today, she oversees all marketing, media relations and advertising activities targeted to consumers and the organization’s membership.

She recalled that the performance of the then five-year-old Check Yearly, See Clearly campaign was hard to measure yet members wanted the organization to do

something to educate consumers about regular vision care. “I discussed with Ed the idea of developing our relationships with other groups and organizations around the vision care field to try to bring everyone together. We partnered with a professional consensus-building firm who worked with us and the discussions have led to the creation of the new Foundation for Eye Health Awareness.”

SHE SAYS...“For work and family it’s the same—focus on your strengths, pick the things you know you can do well, rather than spreading yourself too thin.”

JENNIFER RAINVILLE CRUZ

Director of Professional Development

International Vision Expo
Norwalk, Conn.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“She works very closely with the opticians and optometrists on the Conference Advisory Board to create unique content and programs. Jen has built deep relationships and is highly respected throughout the optical industry and the profession.”



Some 15 years ago when Jennifer Rainville Cruz started at Reed Exhibitions as an entry level coordinator with International Vision Expo, her interests leaned toward adult education but her knowledge of the optical industry was in its infancy. “I had to learn about the optical professions; their training and licensing and credentialing processes. It was through my own educational process that I learned what eyecare professionals do and I was hooked,” Rainville Cruz said.

Today, as director of professional development she oversees and executes the continuing education programs at both International Vision Expo East and West. She is tasked with creating and managing the Conference Advisory Board con-

sisting of 15 optical professionals representing virtually every facet of the professional side of the business. “Education is the best kept secret of the International Vision Expos but I am working on changing that perception,” she said.

Under her tutelage, Vision Expo has become much more than a trade show and new programs such as Visionomics, Spanish Language Track, From Print to Practice, and Lunch With the Experts are a testament to her efforts. Her greatest challenge remains “staying ahead of the CE curve and coming up with different ways to deliver and develop content for ECPs,” she said.

SHE SAYS...“I wonder at the sheer number of eyecare professionals who have kept up with their licensing and credentialing through our programs and feel that I have made perhaps a small contribution to the overall eye health of many Americans.”

JANICE D. GAUB

Senior Director of Marketing, Internet & Social Media

CooperVision
Fairport, N.Y.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“She is bringing her great experience to bear in teaching eyecare professionals how to utilize the web and social media as practice building tools.”



A Pacific Northwest native, Gaub grew up outside Seattle, getting her undergraduate degree from the University of Puget Sound in international affairs and foreign language. She then went on for her MBA from Seattle University while she was working and learning many lessons from her family’s retail/wholesale grocery business, which taught her a great deal about the power of data and providing value to the customer.

She began a range of jobs in the consumer packaged goods realm, which took her around the country, first as brand and marketing man-



ager for such companies as Olympic Home Care, Paragon Trade Brands and Nile Spice Foods. She was VP of marketing for Gargoyles Performance Eyewear and Hobie Polarized Sunglasses from '95 to '97 and joined Eddie Bauer, Inc as divisional VP brand marketing.

As the internet became a new marketing force, Gaub joined Drugstore.com as its VP marketing and site management and then moved to Kodak, where she was chief marketing officer and VP for the company's professional division and ultimately, director of corporate branding. She moved on to become VP of consumer marketing for Shutterfly.com, eventually moving to Rochester, N.Y.

In 2009, she joined CooperVision where there is a growing recognition of the internet and social media's role in building connections with patients and practitioners. "We are looking to make the practices more effective and activate

social media efforts, like our new teen campaign and help them directly build up their sites and presence online." Gaub's team also includes six social media consultants, now on board to help doctors understand the potential.

SHE SAYS..."It's about continuously learning, believing in yourself and staying balanced. Be confident in what you do and do it with grace and poise."

BERNADETTE HISKEY

Director, Product Marketing
Carl Zeiss Vision
San Diego, Calif.

CHOSEN BECAUSE..."Her product ideas and programs are influencing the industry and changing business trends toward the future."



Hiskey is responsible for customized lens product marketing at Carl Zeiss Vision. She is the driving force behind many of the new lens designs the company has introduced in North America and is the chief architect of its "Good Better Best 100% Customized Lens Portfolio." This lens portfolio has significantly grown Carl Zeiss Vision's customized lens business.

Trained as a physicist, Hiskey joined the R&D team at SOLA Optical of Australia in 1993. She moved into technical marketing before taking a series of management positions with SOLA Optical Europe.

"When I first made move into the commercial area, Mark Mattison-Shupnick was tremendously supportive," she noted.

[➤ MORE](#)

Eyes of Faith Optical & VeggieTales

CONGRATULATE

amy schneider
owner & director of style

one of Vision Monday's
2010 MOST INFLUENTIAL WOMEN
in the optical industry



Eyes of Faith
purpose • passion • style
www.eyesoffaithoptical.com

INNOVATORS

Since relocating to the the U.S. in 2001, she has managed SOLA's Transitions brand, led the global launch of SOLAOne progressives, set up Carl Zeiss Vision's AR Coating Teflon coating business and initiated Zeiss' first consumer advertising campaign. "What's exciting is that I take products from R&D all the way through to consumer advertising," she said.

SHE SAYS..."I see more openness to women in senior management roles in our industry, including technical roles. This is an advantage, because women are connecting with the voice of the consumer and using their insights to influence buying decisions made by women."

ANN M. HOSCHEIT, OD, FAAO, FAARM

Owner and Optometric Physician

Summit Eye Associates
Gastonia, N.C.

CHOSEN BECAUSE..."Hoscheit was named Gaston County 2005 Business Woman of the Year, been inducted into the Gaston County Women's Hall of Fame and received numerous honors for her community service and volunteerism."



A funny thing happened to Ann Hoscheit, OD on her way to medical school to become a family physician—she dated the son of an optometrist, and the rest as they say, is history.

In 1990, Hoscheit received her doctor of optometry degree from the University of Houston College of Optometry and went on to her residency in Hospital-Based Optometry/Ocular Disease at Albuquerque V.A. Medical Center in New Mexico.

In 1994, she was the founding partner of Gaston Eye Associates in North Carolina, a fast-paced ophthalmology/optometry practice with multiple locations. Feeling as if something was

missing, Hoscheit moved on, opened Summit Eye Associates in 2003 and has been thankful ever since to "have the opportunity to rethink" her career.

The single location practice offers comprehensive primary eyecare with a philosophy of "personalized approach to patient care" and an emphasis on the overall wellness of its patients through its various "centers of excellence" specializing in contact lenses, dry eye and early detection of eye disease. Hoscheit recently became the first optometrist to be enrolled in the Fellowship in Anti-Aging and Regenerative Medicine. Her business mantra: "Keep it personal and don't compromise the quality of eyecare, eyewear or life care you and your team provide."

SHE SAYS..."I love making a difference in the quality of the lives I touch, either as patients, employees or in the community. Some days we help people see better, some days we keep people from going blind and more days than you might imagine, we save lives. What's not to love about that?"

JULIA MEDINA

Director of Product Strategy

VisionWeb
Austin, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE..."Julia is the 'go-to' person at VisionWeb. She brings a collaborative and creative spirit, technical expertise and a strong work ethic to her strategically critical role. Her commitment and credibility make her a valued and influential resource within the organization and with customers. She has been at the forefront of VisionWeb's success and continued growth."



On July 15, Julia Medina marked her nine-year anniversary with VisionWeb, something she's quite happy about. As a software devel-

oper, Medina found optical to be the perfect environment for her technical skills. In her role as director of product strategy, Medina develops concepts, coordinates and implements the strategic direction of VisionWeb's suite of products, services and processes. "My job is always changing so it's never boring," she said. As the industry evolves, the technology needs of VisionWeb's partners and users also evolve. This keeps Medina on her toes, always looking for new collaborations and different ways of doing things. According to Medina, "There's inspiration at every turn."

SHE SAYS..."Get out there and meet people in this industry! There are so many opportunities to collaborate, be creative, and work together, especially in technology, where a random conversation about a business need can easily turn into the project of your career."

DEBBY MULLINS

Office Administrator

R.D. Cherry, Inc.
Melvindale, Mich.

CHOSEN BECAUSE..."Just spend one day with Debby and if you are not inspired to make a better world for yourself she will say 'now let me tell you' and she will. Debbie is an amazing woman and someday will be a great successor for Cherry Optical, Michigan."



Debby Mullins started working in her father's optical lab washing blue paint off of glass lenses when she was 12 years old. After high school she enrolled in college and discovered that she missed the optical business and returned to Cherry Optical where her father took her under his wing.



“My father Richard has been my greatest mentor and supporter,” said Mullins. “His integrity and character has contributed significantly to me personally and professionally.” Today, Mullins oversees all aspects of marketing from pricing to advertising, from customer service to event coordinator. The Your Eyes University, a one-day event for ECPs, was attended by 600 ECPs with over 25 hours of ABO, NCLE and COPE classes, all scheduled and organized by Mullins.

SHE SAYS...“My advice to other women is to... find a mentor, develop problem solving abilities, positive attitude, and self leadership qualities of integrity, vision, and self-discipline. Most importantly, build relationships. When you do so, you help people reach their potential. Finally, enjoy the work you do.”

NANCY NESS

**Director, Education & Training,
Communications and Services**
Jobson Optical Group
New York, N.Y.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“She has been integral to the promotion of business acumen and optical education for 20 years.”



With an avid interest in magazines, Ness’ first job as assistant to the business manager for a major b-to-b home furnishings publisher, HFD at Fairchild Publications, put her on a fast track for the sales, meeting and trade show planning, skills she then took to the

company’s travel group. Arriving at Jobson in 1991 as marketing and supplements manager, Ness began her involvement in promotion and image-building for all of the group’s optical publications and events, moving on to become director in 1998, responsible for strategic and tactical marketing for a growing group of magazines, websites and events.

Her planning skills have honed Jobson’s reputation among readers and clients over the years in such diverse projects as awards programs, special seminars, gala industry events, corporate meetings and trade shows. Ness’ attention to detail spans small sophisticated dinner meetings to parties both formal and fun, and forums to groups as large as 1,000.

Today, her role is focused on growing Jobson’s opticianry continuing education via the 20/20

[➤ MORE](#)



Recognized as one of Vision Monday’s Influential Women in Optical

Eyefinity®/OfficeMate® Congratulates Rebecca Johnson, Director of Education

Eyefinity/OfficeMate thanks Rebecca for her tireless dedication and commitment to building the eyecare software industry’s strongest and most robust education and training team. Your breadth of knowledge and experience are unmatched.



©2010 Eyefinity, Inc. and OfficeMate Software Solutions, Inc. All rights reserved.

Eyefinity is a registered trademark of Eyefinity, Inc. OfficeMate is a registered trademark of OfficeMate Software Solutions, Inc.

INNOVATORS

Opticianry Study Center which partners with companies to provide quality CE via print, web and live events across the U.S. She noted, “We have a range of CE capabilities and services which can help our users run their businesses better, help them train their staff and enhance the vision care of their patients.”

SHE SAYS...“Be confident, and find a way to get the job done with the resources you have. No one does anything alone—it’s always about a team effort.”

REGINA ROSSI

Director of Research & Development

Mazzuchelli 1849
Varese, Italy

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“She knows trends, she has a great experience, she understands what the creators have in mind and how to realize it.”



Regina Rossi, 63, joined Mazzuchelli 1849, the leading eyewear zyl producer, some 43 years ago, when a summer training spot assisting the general director of

the Varese company turned into a new full-time new position. In the '70s—the early days of Armani—creativity in furniture and fashion design was becoming important in an optical frame world which was used to black and tortoise plastic, Rossi said. “Mr. Mazzuchelli said to me, ‘Everyone’s talking about fashion, maybe we need a lady’s eye here, what about you?’”

The company established a research and development center for “color” technology which has developed, through Rossi’s passion and interests, into a leader for custom colorations and interpretations. With interests as diverse as mathematics, art and painting, Rossi went to fashion exhibitions, and started to meet

with customers and new designers, like Alain Mikli, she recalls, who had new ideas.

“I had the laboratories at my disposal and they thought I was a crazy lady but I started to work with them and the customers step by step. Last year, 85 percent of our production was custom colors, it is huge work. We are working today on many interpretations for many market sectors. We are the link, between the designers and the factories; we are requested to solve the problems they cannot understand.”

SHE SAYS...“Study. And when you study, try to understand everything that is around the problem; not only the problem itself. There is not a simple answer but many questions which can serve the customer. Develop trust.”

BETH SCHLAU

Vice President, Editorial

First Vision Media Group
Maywood, N.J.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“Most busy professionals are time starved today and Beth demystifies many options in a way that the consumer is better served and the trade is consistently brought up to date.”



Beth Schlau has been writing about the optical industry for almost 10 years starting out as Managing Editor and then moving up to Executive Editor of Vision Care Product News. Today, she is Vice President Editorial of First Vision Media Group, the company that publishes VCPN, Sunglasses magazine, Optical Lab Products, and the Understanding & Working With series, which she developed. Schlau described the series as the “first true ‘peer-to-peer’ editorial product to articulate, present and promote optical products in a way the dispenser

can understand and use.”

As a VP, Schlau is responsible for all editorial in both print and online publications, including Vision Care Venture and the company’s e-newsletters. In addition to hiring and supervising the editorial and art staffs, she plans and develops the focus of the magazines’ content and other editorial projects. Her greatest challenge in today’s ever-changing world of media: “Looking for new and better ways to disseminate information.”

SHE SAYS...“We are giving people information about one of the most important things in life—eyesight—and providing them with knowledge about how to make their patients not only see well but look well in the process.”

LISETTE SWENSON

Brand Manager, Marketing

Essilor of America
Dallas, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“Her marketing expertise has been essential in developing and implementing TruClear, a leading private label progressive lens brand manufactured by Essilor of America for the Vision Source group.”



“Drawing upon her extensive background in marketing medical devices for companies such as Johnson & Johnson, Swenson has made her mark in the optical industry in a relatively short time. Since joining Essilor of America four years ago, she has played a key role in managing Essilor’s progressive lens brands such as Accolade and Accolade Freedom.

Collaborating with Jeff Anderson, Essilor’s strategic accounts director, Swenson has also played a leading role in launching and managing the TruClear private label line of progressive lenses, which has been a success for Vision Source, a



major optometric practice management and buying group. Under her direction, the TruClear line has expanded to include TruClear, TruClear HD and TruClear HD Plus, a personalized and customized version launched last month.

Having worked in Europe for a Swedish medical device company prior to joining Essilor, Swenson brings a unique perspective to her job. She said Essilor compares favorably to other European companies because “women are reflected both internationally and domestically in every facet of its business. Women contribute to a multitude of innovative ideas.”

SHE SAYS...“As a woman in business, you have to have relentless drive and focus and be able to deliver best in class products and programs, while balancing the appropriate attitude and insight.”

DAWN WEST

Business Manager, Events
Transitions Optical
Pinellas Park, Fla.

CHOSEN BECAUSE...“Dawn leads a staff that coordinates some of the industry’s most spectacular events. She is the unsung hero who puts on Transitions Academy every year.”



Under West’s management, Transitions Academy has grown over the past decade into a signature event for Transitions Optical. Offering a mix of educational and marketing seminars, the annual conference at the Disney Yacht Club in Orlando, Fla

attracts more than 1,000 enthusiastic participants from three continents.

West also manages trade shows, point-of-sale creative and on-line marketing for the photochromic lens maker. “I like a constantly changing set of creative challenges,” she said.

West joined Transitions’ finance department in 1991 after having been an assistant bank manager. Working in purchasing, marketing, trade public relations and field sales has given her a solid grasp of nearly all aspects of Transitions’ business.

This diverse skill set allows her to effectively manage the teams of people she uses from various departments when producing Transitions Academy. It also gives her the ability to see things from the customer’s perspective, something she tries to instill in others. “The biggest

[➔ MORE](#)



Your significant contributions to the industry are clear.

Congratulations on being named one of the 50 Most Influential Women in Optical.

Tammy Reaves
Vice President
Pearle Vision Operations



LUXOTTICA www.luxotticaretail.com

LensCrafters | Pearle Vision | Sears Optical | Target Optical | Sunglass Hut | ILORI | Optical Shops of Aspen | Luxottica Optical Manufacturing | EyeMed Vision Care | OneSight®

INNOVATORS

thing for me is understanding what the customer is all about," she said.

Although West credits Connie Achman of X-Cel Optical and Connie Falvo of Transitions Optical as positive influences, she counsels young women in optical to be pro-active.

SHE SAYS... "You can't wait for somebody to come along to develop your career. Nobody develops you but you." ■■



Go to the online version of the Cover Story for an alphabetical listing of past honorees and to read prior years' Influential Women in Optical Reports. Only at VisionMonday.com.

METHODOLOGY

Nomination forms requesting submissions for Vision Monday's 8th Annual "Most Influential Women in Optical" report were issued via Vision Monday.com during May and June 2010.

This year's request for nominations was structured like the 2009 Report in that we continued to expand the scope of women recognized in the report, who make leadership contributions throughout the ECP, retail, supplier, lab, managed care and association landscape.

Readers were asked to make nominations per the following categories: **Executive Suite, Mentors, Rising Stars** and **Innovators**. The nomination form defined these as: **Executive Suite**—Candidates are women who hold positions such as president, VP, CEO, CFO, CMO, CIO or COO that guide their companies forward, inspire leadership among their teams and peers and achieve high performance. **Mentors**—Candidates are women who are team builders, developers of talent, who via example or education successfully influence others to grow in their business or professional acumen. **Rising Stars**—Candidates are women who are "up-and-comers" in their careers and within their companies or arenas; sharp talents who are on their way toward higher levels of responsibility and influence. **Innovators**—Candidates are women who have initiated new product developments or special programs in the arena of marketing, technology or retail, who have spearheaded innovative business ideas or enterprises.

The "Influential Women" process is not designed to be a vote or a ranking. Nominations were reviewed and categorized by **VM's** editors. The "Chosen Because..." selections are drawn from the submitted nominations. Honorees are listed alphabetically by category. ■■

It's All in the Details.

Big Details, Small Details. Serious Details, Fun Details.

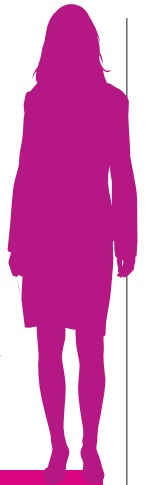
For Nancy Ness...
It's Biz-Ness as usual...Done.
Perfectly.

One Last Detail...
Thank You!

- FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT 

Congratulations to all 2010 Influential Women in Optical!

The Next Generation of Optical Leaders



In honoring this year's "Most Influential Women in Optical," it makes sense to also recognize the new batch of female opticians and optometrists who have recently graduated from the nation's professional schools.

The students chosen to make up VM's "Class of 2010" Special Report are perhaps the most accomplished yet. Each has not only excelled academically but has made it a point to dedicate time to both research and volunteer projects, while receiving numerous honors, awards and scholarships in the process.

The care and compassion each student has shown is surely a sign of what lies ahead for them as they embark on their professional careers. More importantly, their success can only serve as an indicator of further advancement in the optical field to which they have dedicated themselves.

This marks the 5th edition of our special section, underwritten by a grant from the Luxottica Group. We hope you enjoy their education "stories." ■

OPTOMETRY STUDENTS

JENNIFER CHEN, OD

New England College of Optometry
Boston, Mass.



Chen began interning at Hoag Hospital in Newport Beach, Calif., went on to volunteer at local private practices and worked as an eyecare advisor at LensCrafters. "Helping people see is a rewarding experience," she said.

While at New England College of Optometry, Chen was active in student organizations and received the F. Dow Smith Award for leadership and the Dr. Hyman R. Kamens Scholarship for dedication to the optometry community.

After a trip to Taiwan, Chen plans to look for a job in primary care with a focus in pediatrics, vision therapy or low vision.

HER SCHOOL SAYS..."She was the first woman president of the New England College of Optometry Student Council."

MICHELLE DePEAU, OD

Indiana University School of Optometry
Bloomington, Ind.



Originally from New Franken, Wis., with a BS in biology from The University of Wisconsin-Madison, DePeau says she always knew she wanted to work in the health care field. While an undergrad, she worked at a private optometric practice. She has served as president and treasurer of the Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity (VOSH), confirming her dedication by traveling to Guanajuato, Mexico to participate in a week-long mission trip to provide eyecare there.

She served in leadership positions in the American Optometric Student Association, the American Public Health Association and the Gold Key National Honor Society.

HER SCHOOL SAYS..."Michelle will strengthen her leadership skills and be a trailblazer."

LAUREN GOLDSMITH, OD

Southern College of Optometry
Memphis, Tenn.



In addition to being secretary for the 2010 SCO class, Goldsmith also served as a Student Ambassador, giving tours and answering questions for prospective students. In recognition of her academic achievements she received the Drs. Fred and Charlene Burnett Student Research Award for her work in patient care.

A graduate of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville with a BA in biology and a minor in Latin, Goldsmith will next complete a Family Practice Residency at West Tennessee Eye, a private group practice in Memphis. The Roanoke, Va. native said, "There are few family practice residencies and this one is a role model for me."

HER SCHOOL SAYS..."A wonderful young woman with unlimited potential."

The Next Generation
of Leadership
is presented by

LUXOTTICA®

WORKING
TOGETHER

OPTOMETRY STUDENTS

LAUREN GRILLOT, OD

Ohio State University College of Optometry
Columbus, Ohio



Grillot completed a dual degree program in optometry and vision science at Ohio State while maintaining a 3.78 GPA and being involved in the optometric fraternity Epsilon

Psi Epsilon. She was also president of Beta Sigma Kappa, treasurer of Gold Key and an active member of the American Optometric Student Association and the American Academy of Optometry.

With the help of Melissa Bailey, OD, PhD, Grillot's thesis was a study of the ciliary muscle, accommodation and refractive error. She is working with Carolyn Davis, OD, in Troy, Ohio to help develop a pediatric and vision therapy division.

HER SCHOOL SAYS... "Lauren is an outstanding clinician and scholar. She will undoubtedly be a future leader of our profession."

NICOLE HENRIKSEN, OD

Illinois College of Optometry
Chicago, Ill.



After attending Black Hills University in Spearfish, S.D., Henriksen began her optical education at ICO and was amazed at all "you could discover about one's overall health by examining their eyes." A recipient of the ICO Faculty Scholarship, Henriksen was also an AOSA Trustee and Delegate. Honored with The Carl Zeiss Fellowship and the Cribbs Leadership Award, Henriksen will spend the summer working on her family ranch before heading West to Helena Vision Center in Montana "to start living my dream."

HER SCHOOL SAYS... "A distinguished member of the ICO class recognized by three honors societies."

BRIANNE HOBBS, OD

University of Missouri-St. Louis College of Optometry
St. Louis, Mo.



Hobbs insists that no "deeply inspirational story" led her to become an optometrist, however, she does thank hometown optometrist Anne Ream, OD, in getting her started in optical.

Her list of accomplishments while at UMSL includes Dean's award for highest GPA and winner of the national AOA CLCS student essay contest. Hobbs also won numerous scholarships and was a member of several professional and honor societies. Currently a resident at the Kansas City VAMC, Hobbs is keeping her options open when her position ends next June.

HER SCHOOL SAYS... "Brienne possesses an enviable and rare combination of high academic ability and compassion with an uncompromising pursuit of excellence."

KYLA HUNTER, OD

Pacific University College of Optometry
Forest Grove, Oregon



After completing two undergraduate degrees at the University of Calgary, in biology and psychology, Hunter decided to pursue optometry because "it allowed me to interact and build relationships with patients."

She is currently working toward her Masters in Education and then it's on to Grand Prairie, Alberta where she'll join Northern Vision Center, a large group practice. Hunter received the 2010 Dean's Award from Pacific University.

HER SCHOOL SAYS... "She was always willing to roll up her shirtsleeves to get the job done."

AMANDA NANASY, OD

Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry
Davie, Fla.



At Nova Southeastern University (NSU), Nanasy was class president and a member of the Nova Optometry Practice Management Association, College of Optometrists in Vision

Development and American Optometric Student Association. Focusing on sports vision, she worked with the Orlando Magic, the Miami Dolphins and the NSU baseball team, as part of a presidential research grant.

Nanasy will continue with The Eye Center of Davis and Morris, the official eyecare provider for the Miami Dolphins.

HER SCHOOL SAYS... "A well-rounded student. Her personality allows her to relate to any patient."

DIANE RUSSO, OD

SUNY College of Optometry
New York



For each of her four years at the College, Russo was president of the SUNY Optometry Class of 2010. Originally from Staten Island, N.Y., she received a BS degree in Health Science Studies from Quinnipac College.

She was the Trustee-Elect of the American Optometric Student Association while currently serving on the American Optometric Association Optometry's Meeting Committee.

At graduation, Russo received the Morton L. Kimmelman Memorial Award for student leadership in organized optometry and the NYSOA Auxiliary Award for outstanding service.

HER SCHOOL SAYS... "Diane is known for her tireless advocacy, and dedication to the profession."

OPTICIANRY STUDENTS

LISBETH AQUINO

**Middlesex Community College
Middletown, Conn.**



Aquino was taking a few college courses but found the optical program at Middlesex, near to her home.

A single mom, she juggled work and classes while completing her program, getting a clinical fellowship at the Connecticut Eye Center, a contact lens specialty practice and also helping at the CL clinic on campus.

Aquino has also been taking a few classes at cosmetology school and some online courses as well. She passed the state boards and is now pre-optometry, inspired to continue her work in the vision care realm.

"It's so amazing to help someone, to see people's faces and make them happy about their vision."

HER SCHOOL SAYS..."She's done a clinical fellowship, just passed her state boards and is pre-optometry. She's a dynamo."

JEANNEL BISHOP

**New York City College of Technology
Brooklyn, N.Y.**



Bishop was very active in many department projects in the Vision Care Technology program, secretary of the Student Optical Society and responsible for keeping her fellow classmates up to date about new products by inviting guest speakers to the school. She has been working at LensCrafters for two years and with her ABO-NCLE certification will apply for her license in September.

After consulting with her professors, she has

decided to begin studies this fall in pre-med and pursue ophthalmology.

HER SCHOOL SAYS..."Her desire to learn and her commitment is impressive. Whatever she undertakes, she does with enthusiasm and motivation."

ANGELA CROWLEY

**Ogeechee Technical College
Statesboro, Ga.**



Crowley had been managing a cell phone store for many years and when it closed, she was determined to find something else. She happened to go to the eye doctor that week for her yearly checkup and found herself intrigued by the exam, with the doctor even commenting that she might consider the vision industry.

When she enrolled in Ogeechee, she signed up for the opticianry program and with the encouragement of instructors Deborah Deloach and Scott Lloyd, she thrived.

Crowley was student advisor on the Optical Advisory Committee, became a certified children's vision screener and was part of the National Technical Honor Society, graduating with honors. ABO-NCLE certified, she is studying to get her state license this fall.

HER SCHOOL SAYS..."She is very hard working and is a non-traditional student in that she is older and returned to school after being out for many years. She is motivated to changing her life."

CHRISTINA HENRY

**Indiana University School of Optometry,
Optician/Technician Program
Bloomington, Ind.**



Henry earned a BS degree in kinesiology from Indiana University but after graduation, felt that she wanted a more specific career path.

Wanting to stay in the healthcare field and remain in Bloomington, she was intrigued by the optician/technician degree offered by the IU school of optometry. Henry was class treasurer and received her class' "Technician of the Year Award" for overall excellence in all areas as an optometric technician.

She is currently working as an ophthalmic assistant at The Eye Center of Southern Indiana and hopes to develop her career there.

HER SCHOOL SAYS..."Christina excelled academically and clinically."

MICHELLE LYNHAM

**Cuyahoga Community College
Cleveland, Ohio**



Although her parents have owned Family Optical in Middleburg Heights, Ohio since 1981, Lynham graduated from Kent State University with a BA in Communications. Returning to her family's store as an apprentice, she attended Cuyahoga Community College long enough to pass the ABO exams.

Lynham finished her Associate's degree in Optical Technology seven years later and was awarded a Digital Corneal Reflective Pupillometer by Essilor while there.

Having just taken the National Contact Lens Exam, Lynham plans "to take over the family business and keep it as successful as my parents have."

HER SCHOOL SAYS..."Michelle will be a leader in the ophthalmic community."

OPTICIANRY STUDENTS

REBECCA MORTON

**Roane State Community College
Harriman, Tenn.**



Morton became interested in opticianry after working at an independent optical lab. "Once I became aware of the opportunities available to licensed opticians I enrolled at Roane State."

Morton was a member of the Student Optical Society and student representative to the Opticianry Program's advisory board. She currently works at LensCrafters and volunteers for Remote Area Medical (www.ramusa.org), providing no-cost health care to the needy.

She will also represent Roane State at the NFOS College Bowl competition this September at the OAA Convention/ABO/NCLE Education Conference.

HER SCHOOL SAYS..."Was our leading female graduate, and selected Outstanding Opticianry Student of the Year by her fellow students."

QUYEN NGUYEN

**Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology
Boston, Mass.**



Nguyen graduated from Holy Cross in 2006 with a Bachelor's in science and started to work at a private optometry practice called Newton Eye, assisting ODs with pre-testing duties. After about a year, she became more interested in the optical aspect of eyecare.

Nguyen started with just one lab course at Ben Franklin, and decided to obtain her opti-

cianry license. Still working part time, she completed an accelerated one-year program and last November passed her ABO/NCLE exams. She is awaiting the state practical exam this September, the final step in obtaining her license.

HER SCHOOL SAYS..."She is an outstanding student and remains motivated to succeed."

KRISTY PENNA

**Erie Community College
Williamsville, N.Y.**



Penna, who hails from the Rochester area, wanted to be a dental hygienist, but through a friend discovered the opticianry program at Erie.

She was inspired by work she did making eyeglasses for the needy in the community, via a OneSight event as well as for a local doctor who traveled to third world countries.

Penna continues to volunteer and now also loves working full time in the field at Clarence Eyecare, an optometric practice in Clarence, N.Y. She said, "It's a really high-technology office and a great place to learn new things."

HER SCHOOL SAYS..."Kristy has embraced the profession with enthusiasm."

JENNIFER TRAMONTANA

**Raritan Valley Community College
Somerville, N.J.**



While working full time, as a single mother raising two sons, Tramontana passed all five of her state board examinations on her first attempt—an extraordinary accom-

plishment in N.J., her school reports.

Having worked for various opticians and optometrists since high school, Tramontana says after a tough divorce, she gave up her original college education to focus on her boys. But when she saw how well-established her sister, Emma, became in the industry as an optician through the Raritan Valley program back in 1996 with Brian Thomas as her professor/mentor, too, she enrolled in the program.

She is currently an optical manager for Dr. Bradford Ripps at Total Eyecare, Vernon, N.J.

HER SCHOOL SAYS..."She was always engaged, prepared and made the intellectual connections that professors love to see in their students."

NURA ZAYED

**Broward Community College
Coconut Creek, Fla.**



Inspired by her father, who passed away when she was 8, Zayed has always had a passion for medicine.

While working in a medical office, she noticed elderly patients suffering with vision problems, and changed her major from nursing to opticianry.

Zayed is now ABO certified and in November will sit for the NCLE exams; she plans to transfer to a university to get her BA in business. A 22-year-old Palestinian Muslim, Zayed hopes to one day open her own optical business.

HER SCHOOL SAYS..."Nura has the top academic scores in her classes and she also goes the extra mile to help her fellow classmates and patients." ■■